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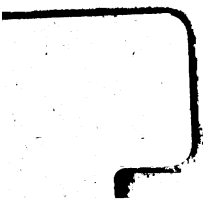


Ballings

Farmer, S.

★ Dr. JOHN S. BILLINGS.

JUN 5 1913



Rollings

Farmer, J. J.

★ Dr. JOHN S. BILLINGS.

JUN 5 1913

THE GRAND MADEMOISELLE

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The GRAND MADEMOISELLE

From the Memoirs of CHARLES-
ALEXANDRE, *Comte de Lannoy*, pre-
mier écuyer to the KING LOUIS XIV.

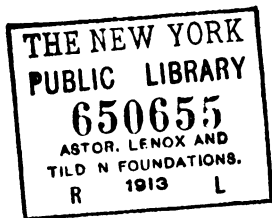
By
JAMES EUGENE FARMER, M. A.
Author of "*The Grenadier*," "*Essays on
French History*," etc.



New York

DODD, MEAD & COMPANY

1899



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TO
MY MOTHER

TO
MY MOTHER

WON
JUN
WANG

PREFACE

ON GUARD, MONSIEUR!

YESTERDAY I was at Marly and followed the king during his promenade. His Majesty did me the honor to address some words to me at the great carp basin. "These carp are very old," said the king to me. "Yes, sire," I replied, "they have no doubt witnessed many things." "You, too, have seen much in your time, Monsieur le Comte," said the king, saluting me with his incomparable grace. Then, as the chair of Madame de Maintenon approached, he quitted the basin to join her; all the court followed, and I was left alone.

It was then I resolved to write my memoirs, for, as the king said, I have seen much in my time, and my time, like the century, is drawing to a close. In a year the century dies—and I? I may see 1701, perhaps even 1705, but before I go I will fight a duel. Yes, I, Charles-Alexandre, Comte de Lannoy, though my hand now wields a sword but ill, though the king punishes duel-

ing without mercy, I will fight a duel—a duel with death, my foe! See! there he stands, draped in a shroud. On guard! on guard, monsieur! I'll fight thee as I fought Ruffo de Bonneval in the old days. Aha! I pierce thee with my pen. He cries a truce. Monsieur le Médecin, a glass of wine! Your health, Monsieur le Médecin, your health! You are a second, the most valiant for the duel with death, and you, brave pen, a rapier the most sure.

Adieu, Versailles! I shall no longer follow the king among the fountains of the Allée-d'Eau, or play at the queen's card-tables in the Salon de la Paix. I shall no longer dance the *passepiéd* in the Galerie des Glaces, or wait in the Oeil-de-Boeuf for the grand *lever*. The king will see me no more beside the marble chimney, when he looks to right and to left at his supper and his *coucher*.

But here in my château, in my cabinet—from whose windows I can see my field of hemp, thick and abundant, waving its decorative leaves and shaking its dark green mantle beside the silvery rye, while my peasants pull it up and tie the protesting stalks into little bundles for the retting—here in my château I shall write, living

again the gay, the grand, the glorious past, when Monsieur le Prince le grand Condé wore his new-won laurels of Rocroi, when we, the gentlemen of France, flung defiance at the Mazarin, and when Mademoiselle, la Grande Mademoiselle—the princess of my heart!—rode royally to Orleans.

Monsieur Death, the Comte de Lannoy, pen in hand, defies thee! On guard, monsieur! On guard!

LANNOY-LE-DUC, 1699.

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CHAPTER I

LES COMMENTAIRES DE CÉSAR

I BEGIN with the year 1644, when I was twenty, for before twenty a man's life is nothing. He rides, he fences, he falls in love, or thinks he does; if he is of the *noblesse de cour*, he is brought to the king's antechamber; if of the *noblesse de province*, he hunts in his father's park, if his father still has one. My father—I can see him yet; taller than most men with the grandest shoulders in the world, a high color, a blue eye that flashed till the day he died, and a grandeur about his gait and bearing not unlike the present king. He was a great nobleman. I heard often as a child how he stood, leaning on his sword, in the centre of his hall to receive Henri IV., to whom he said, "Sire, the Comte de Lannoy bids you welcome." That was a proud act. He and such as he have passed away. Now, if the king comes, the noble bends the knee at the park gate; we are all courtiers; it is Richelieu and Mazarin who have done it.

I remember, too, my tutor, Dominique Panat, a man curiously put together—such loose joints, such big knuckles always red, a yellow face ripped and ribbed with wrinkles, hair straight, thin and greasy. He walked scarcely bending his knees, his body teetering on his hips, and when in distress he always rubbed his left eye. Faithful fellow, he did little for me, but do not blame him. With him I translated the *Commentaires de César*. Ah, what mornings !

“Will monsieur give me his attention for one moment,” he would say in his soft voice, “only for one moment. This is the line, monsieur, *dum haec in colloquio geruntur*. Will monsieur have the goodness to look at the word *dum*, at the small word *dum*, and give the signification ?”

I replied invariably, “I don’t know.”

“Will monsieur have the goodness to listen while I read ? ‘While these things are being transacted in the conference.’ Will monsieur graciously repeat ?”

I repeated.

“Excellent, monsieur, excellent!” he exclaimed. “Monsieur’s memory is extraordinary. Will monsieur graciously regard the next ? *Cæ-*

sari nuntiatum est. What may the meaning of *Cæsari* be, monsieur?"

That was not difficult. "Cæsar," I replied, promptly.

"Magnificent! monsieur, and the case?"

"Anything you please."

"Will monsieur graciously render the next?"

"Monsieur will not," said I, sharply, for by this time I was tired. Then I drew him into a discussion—not a difficult matter when one knew his hobby—and I listened, meanwhile, for the horn to sound, announcing the comte's hunt.

"Panat," said I, "is your Cæsar a great man?"

"A very great man, monsieur."

"Well, why does he write stuff which no one can read?"

"He could read it, monsieur."

"Get him to read it to you then. I am certain he would enjoy it more than I."

"Cæsar is dead, monsieur."

"When did he die? Was he killed by Henri IV.?"

"No, monsieur. He died long before there was any king in France."

"Bah! There has always been a king in France."

"I pray that monsieur will pardon the statement, but there was none when Cæsar came to France."

"Did Cæsar come to France?"

"He did, monsieur."

"Did he come to see the Comte de Lannoy?"

"No, monsieur."

"Why not? Henri IV. came, and he was greater than Cæsar."

"I pray that monsieur will pardon the statement, but when Cæsar came to France there were no Comtes de Lannoy." This put me on my mettle. "No Comtes de Lannoy!" I cried. "Learn, fool, that since God made the world there were Comtes de Lannoy, and their names have been Charles-Alexandre!"

This statement being unanswerable, my tutor rubbed his eye. The horn sounded. "The Comte de Lannoy goes to the hunt," I cried, leaping up, "and I go with him."

"Will monsieur graciously look at the next line? Only one small line, *equites Ariovisti*——"

"No!" I roared. "The devil take you, your Cæsar and your *dum*. I'm off to chase the boar. Bazille, my boots! my spurs!"

With the fencing-master it was better, and

with the riding-master best of all. La Lochon, my old nurse, would tell me I was a fine sight when I came galloping into the castle-court after the chase.

“Mon Dieu! little son,” she would cry, “you sit a horse like the comte himself. My baby! my baby! how tall he has grown! Oh the lovely blue eyes! Oh the sweet healthy cheeks! Old La Lochon is proud when she sees you—proud as the Princesse de Pajou with her new coach and six—you to whom I gave suck so long.”

All this had the effect of making me vain for a time. We are strange things! I am a peer of France and premier écuyer to the king; I have had the blue ribbon and the *grandes entrées*; I have supped with monseigneur; the king has walked with me on the terrace at Trianon; I have been among the favored few summoned to Marly, and yet, even now, I remember with pleasure the words of an old woman—perhaps because they are the apotheosis of that youth, no longer mine.

And my mother—why do I not mention her? She was to me but a name and a portrait. I honored the one and gazed fondly at the other. There she was with her white jeweled hands and her great ruff, smiling kindly at me with her soft

eyes. "If thou wert here," said I, "I should somehow be happier than I am."

Then it was a question of my marriage. One morning when Bazille was putting on my *justaucorps*, he told me that my father had arranged matters.

"What does monsieur think?" said he.

"Who is she?" said I.

"Ah, monsieur, I have such a poor memory for names. I heard only by chance when the door of the cabinet was open. Let me see—G—no, it was not G. P—ah, yes! it was P—Pen—Pan——"

"Pajou?" I inquired.

"Yes, monsieur, Pajou. Mademoiseile de Pajou."

"I will never have her!" I cried. "I have seen her. She has a hump and is as ugly as the devil, even from a distance. No! I will never have her."

"But, monsieur," said Bazille, "she is very rich. M. le Prince de Pajou gives her a dower of one hundred thousand crowns, and M. le Comte has made up his mind."

"And so have I, Bazille," I said, angrily, and went to *dejeuner*.

It was one of my mornings with Panat and the *Commentaires de César*. Poor Panat! he had a tough time of it, I know. His left eye was red from rubbing. I thought, at first, that my father might have sent Bazille to sound me, but I gave up that idea; I knew him too well. The Comte de Lannoy was accustomed to be obeyed. I loved my father; I was very proud of him, but, in truth, I was afraid of him. It was then with a slow and diffident manner that I sought his apartment, not in my usual dashing style with spurs clattering. I scratched the panel, and he bade me enter. The room, hung all in red, seemed larger to me than usual. My father and his secretary, the thin Trégadoret, were working at a table in the centre. How splendidly the great comte looked in his green and gold hunting-dress!—for he was going shortly to the chase, and the boar-hounds, Belle and Ponne, were by his side. Belle ran gladly to sniff me.

“Well, monsieur,” said my father, smiling, “do you wish to go to my hunt?”

“No, Monsieur le Comte,” said I, so nervous in spite of this good beginning that I dropped my hat and had to stoop and pick it up.

"Then why do you come?" said he, continuing his work.

"Monsieur mon père," I answered, "I understand that you have a project for my marriage. May I ask if it is true, and also the name of the young lady?" My father looked up.

"Son," said he, severely, "be good enough to mind your own business, and do not bother me with questions."

"Monsieur mon père," I replied, with more firmness than I had supposed possible, "I desire to inform you that I do not wish to marry."

"Your wishes, sir, in a matter of this kind," said my father, "are of no consequence."

I wanted to shout, "They are!" but did not dare. I was furious and knew not what to do, and, in fact, did nothing. The comte waved his hand as a sign that the interview was ended, and I left the apartment, red with rage, but sufficiently master of myself not to allow him to perceive it.

CHAPTER II

GUILLAUME LE CONQUÉRANT

AT the top of the staircase I ran against Panat, coming up. My bottled anger burst. "Get out of my way!" I roared, and kicked him. I have often regretted that. Panat drew aside with a low bow, while I ran down the staircase and out into the courtyard. There stood the comte's horses and huntsmen ready for the chase. I saw Cougny, the pricker, holding the big bay stallion Guillaume le Conquérant, an old pet of mine, and running up to him, I shouted, "Give me that horse!" Cougny knew better than to refuse, and seizing the mane, I swung up, kicked the horse with my heels, and away we went through the iron gates and down the grand avenue to the high-road. At last I could give vent to my rage. How glorious it was! Race! rush! gallop! Le Conquérant had never been put to it like this before; the blood of youth is hot and has no mercy.

The wood of St. Geneviève was tinged with

orange by the October sun; the meadows were purpled by the colchicum and whitened here and there by the silky skeins of the *filz de la Vierge*, while the gold and crimson leaves that hid the highway whirled furiously from le Conquérant's hurtling hoofs. All this I felt rather than saw, for I kicked le Conquérant with my heels and beat him with the bridle-reins. "I will never have her!" I shouted. "I will rebel!" The word had a strange sound and pleased me. We reached the ploughed fields. I could see oxen advancing abreast, their great necks curved under the yoke, pulling vigorously, their legs braced against the heavy soil. The earth-stained peasant, crooked over the plough-handle, guided them with the goad, singing meanwhile his drawling *arauder* to call them by name:

"Levréa, Rouet,
Gageâ, Cadet,
Tartaret! Doret!
Eh! Eh! my darling!
Oh! Oh! my valet!"

The notes rose and swelled and were lost in the thunder of le Conquérant's hoofs. As I dashed past the bridge of the Orge, I caught a far glimpse of Savigny with its pointed towers,

the domain of M. le Prince de Pajou. "Aha!" I shouted, "the Château de Pajou! The château of the father-in-law that is not to be!" and again I beat le Conquérant with the bridle-reins.

Near the mill of Mion the road branched; to the left, it went to Juvisy-sur-Orge; to the right, it followed the ploughed fields. I whirled to the right at full speed, but hardly had I made the turn, when I saw, some hundred paces before me, a peasant crossing the road with his plough. I came like a thunderbolt. The terrified fellow beat the earth with his wooden sabots and bawled to his oxen, "hue! dia! ohé!" but the great lumbering beasts, confused and confounded, balked. He blocked the road fairly. "Stay where you are!" I roared. "I will leap you! 'Sdeath! I will leap you. It will be glorious!" And then, while I dashed my heels and shouted gleefully "*Allons! allons!*" and the rude plough shook with the vibration, and the trembling oxen snorted, and the praying peasant cried in terror, "Jesu! Maria!" the foaming Conquérant came.

There was a leap and a tremendous crash. The oxen were yanked upon their knees; the peasant knocked by the plough-handle into the

ditch; the plough flattened to the earth. I was hurled through the air and measured my length on the highway, while in the centre of the wreck and wrack, his leg broken, an iron from the plough piercing his side, gray with foam and red with blood, lay the great stallion, gasping his last. Le Conquérant had come, and with him cataclysm.

CHAPTER III

MONSIEUR FALCOZ

It seemed to me that I was in my room at the château while my father, standing before me booted and spurred, kept demanding, "Will you have Mlle. de Pajou? Will you have Mlle. de Pajou?" Then a fellow in red came in, bearing a mighty ax, the handle of which was all bright fire, and he swung it round and round. "If you don't marry Mlle. de Pajou, this fellow will cut off your head," cried my father. I had just strength to shout, "I will never have her!" and then Guillaume le Conquérant dashed through the tapestry bearing old La Lochon on his back, the room spun round and round, the chandelier fell with a crash upon the head of the fellow with the flaming ax, and I came to on the highway, saw the peasant crawling out of the ditch, and heard the galloping of horses' hoofs and the shouts of men.

"Make way! make way!" they cried. "Way for Madame la Princesse de Pajou!" Then with

a rattling volley of oaths they pulled up before the wreck. They were big fellows in the green and silver-laced Pajou livery. "Ass! clown! bastard!" shouted one, leaping from his horse, "how dare you block the road before the Princesse de Pajou? Take that, you fool, and that, you knave!" And suiting the action to the word, he beat the peasant over the shoulders with his riding-whip. It made me mad to see him use the helpless fellow in this fashion, and, if I could, I would have put a stop to it, for, though I have no great regard for peasants, I have never ill-used them except on rare occasions when my temper was too much for me, but a lackey is always more insolent than a lord.

The outriders attempted to remove the wreck, the task was difficult, and they cursed roundly. One started to unyoke the oxen, while the other drove the trembling peasant before him to draw aside the plow, and in the midst of their occupations, the coach of the princesse came at a gallop, swaying from side to side, the six dappled horses snorting, and the green-coated postillions cracking their whips. "Stop! stop!" cried one of the outriders, waving his arm. The postillions tugged on the bridle-reins, the dappled

horses slackened their pace, and the coach stopped at last not far from where I lay at the roadside. It was a fine coach for those days, trimmed with brown and gold and hung with red curtains which were drawn—a fine coach, but nothing to the coaches we see to-day, bright with glass and gilding, on the road from Paris to Versailles. “Ah,” said I to myself, “it is the new coach of the Princesse de Pajou of which La Lochon spoke.” Then the red curtains were opened, and, enveloped in a great headdress, the sharp, wrinkled face of the Princesse de Pajou peered out. Her glance fell on me. “Mon Dieu!” she cried, “it is the Vidame de Baudreuille” (for that was my name before the comte’s title came to me). “Help! help!” she cried. “Auguste! Sébastien! It is the Vidame de Baudreuille.” The two green outriders came running fast enough then and raised me up.

“Ah!” said I, for I felt sharp pain.

“Mon Dieu! monsieur,” cried the princesse, “what has happened? Are you killed?”

In spite of pain, the question made me smile, and saluting her as well as I could, I answered, “Madame la Princesse, I am dead.”

“Come, come, Auguste! Come, come, Sé-

bastien! You are slow," she cried. "Bring him here. Be careful of his arm. Here on the seat beside me, Sébastien. There,—fetch some wine from the boot. Quick! Sébastien, you are slow. Ah, M. de Baudreuille, I am distressed to find you thus. Françoise, support his head."

The lady-in-waiting bent over me, and all was restful with a flutter of lace and a soft perfume of amber. "Françoise is very pretty," thought I.

Sébastien brought the wine; it was very good wine; I remember it even now, and then the princesse said, "How are you now, monsieur?"

"Fit to follow the boar, madame," I answered, "but for my ankle which I think is sprained and my arm which seems out of joint."

"And your head?"

"Excellent. It would have been cracked, no doubt, but for my hair."

"Falcoz will have you mended soon, but tell me quickly what has happened."

"Madame la Princesse," said I, "Guillaume le Conquérant and I had begun a career of conquest, but, like his namesake of Normandy, le Conquérant fell with more disastrous results."

"Guillaume le Conquérant! The horse of the Comte de Lannoy! Where is he now?"

"If you look out, madame, you will see."

The princesse did so.

"Heavens!" she cried, "this is dreadful. The road is blocked; we shall be late, and Monsieur le Prince will be in a pounding passion."

"They can hitch the oxen to him," said I, "and drag him to one side. Poor le Conquérant! I never expected that he would end like this."

"Oxen?" said the princesse, mystified.

"Yes," said I, "they were the Belgæ. I was Cæsar and I charged them; it was to have been the battle of Axona." And I smiled as I remembered Panat. "If Panat could hear that," I thought, "he would be happy for a week." The princesse looked out again and saw the oxen which Auguste had unyoked from the plow. "Auguste!" she cried, "fasten them to the horse of M. le Comte de Lannoy and drag him aside. Quick! quick! and then to the château." With the assistance of the postillions this was accomplished, the peasant, meanwhile, looking at his ruined plough and wringing his hands.

"Now," cried the princesse, "let us go!"

"One moment, Madame la Princesse," said I, "I have here five louis which the comte gave

me on my fête-day. This peasant, though of the victorious Belgæ, has suffered at Axona, and the vanquished must pay tribute," and I motioned to the fellow to approach. He came, cap in hand and trembling. "Here," said I, tossing him the louis, "buy yourself a new plough." Then the whips cracked, and the brown and gold coach rolled onward, but, in passing, I heard his prayer, "God save the prince!" "I am not a prince," thought I, "but the wish goes."

I wondered why I was so contented. Perhaps it was because of the flutter of lace, the perfume of amber, and the face of Françoise. "There will be a scene when we arrive and the comte returns," I thought, "for I will never have her." This last I said aloud.

"What?" said the princesse.

"What did I say, madame?"

"I could not hear well for the noise of the coach. Are you in pain?"

"You said, monsieur—" began Françoise, but I looked at her and she stopped.

"Well, I must have been dreaming," I answered. "Are we near the Château de Lannoy?"

"The Château de Lannoy! certainly not; we are going to the Château de Pajou. We are

much behind our time now. Monsieur le Prince—" and then the princesse checked herself nervously. I perceived the cause well enough for I had heard much of Monsieur le Prince de Pajou, a man full of ability and valor and, when it pleased him, of grace and politeness, yet jealous, suspicious, full of deceit and artifice, cholerick and headstrong. His wife was his continual victim, notwithstanding her sweetness, her piety and her indefatigable submission. Even kicks and blows were not spared her, and in the most trifling things she was not the mistress. When the fancy seized him, he made her set out from one place to another, or leave her coach when she had entered it and begin her journey on the following day. I had heard that this sort of thing had lasted once for twelve days in succession when the court was at Fontainebleau. In short he was a cruel father, a terrible husband and a disagreeable neighbor, and yet when he pleased he could captivate. I understood, therefore, the desire of the princesse, but it did not suit me at all to go to the Château de Pajou. The thing struck me as ridiculous. An hour before I had been galloping madly along the high-road, my blood bounding, and rebellion rampant in my

heart, defying my father and all who bore the name of Pajou, and now over the same road, propped among the cushions of the coach and side by side with a prospective mother-in-law, I was whirling into the jaws of matrimony. I laughed, though I fancy the princesse never understood why, for there was no laughter in my tone when I said, "Madame, I must go to the Château de Lannoy."

"It is impossible, monsieur. Don't speak of it, I pray you," and the princesse looked uneasy.

"Then I beg you to leave me by the road as you found me. I shall get on very well."

"What! monsieur, leave you on the road? This is preposterous. Can you not understand? I must lose no time in reaching Monsieur le Prince. He has summoned me from Paris. You shall have the best of care and go to-morrow to the Château de Lannoy. I will send a messenger to your father."

"By no means!" I cried, angrily. My tone must have been very rough, for Françoise started, and the princesse cried, "Monsieur!"

"Madame la Princesse," said I, turning toward her, "pray pardon me."

"What! sir," she cried, "you do not desire

your father to know where you are or what has happened to you?"

"No, madame."

"I cannot understand—" began the princesse, but at that moment we arrived.

The great stone staircase of the Château de Pajou was filled with valets and underservants, the doors were open, all seemed confusion, and before the wheels had ceased to turn, M. Falcoz, the portly doctor of M. le Prince, was at the coach door, his fat face beneath his flowing wig shining with the sweat of anxiety.

"Madame la Princesse," he cried, "I am in despair. Monsieur le Prince has eaten nothing for three days. He has a new idea. He declares he is dead and that dead men never eat. I have coaxed, I have threatened, but it is of no avail. Alas! I am an artist who cannot display his art."

The Princesse de Pajou, pale and excited, cried to the valets, "Philibert! Denis! Lusignan! open the door. Make haste!" and springing from the coach with an agility quite remarkable in a person of her age, she started up the staircase. Then turning suddenly, "Falcoz," she cried, "attend to Monsieur le Vidame de Baudreuille,"

and forgetting all else, she hastened into the château. Françoise, as she was bound to do, followed her quickly, and I witnessed this second departure with real regret. Then I looked at Falcoz. The stout doctor appeared in despair.

“Monsieur le Médecin,” said I, “you are ill at ease.”

“I am desperate, monsieur, mad, beside myself. Shades of Hippocrates! how can I handle this case? He swears he is dead, monsieur. He tells me, Falcoz, that he is dead, and that as dead men never eat, he will touch nothing. He will starve himself to death, he will die, and I, Falcoz, a physician of the first rank, shall bear the blame. It is horrible. It is detestable. An artist must display his art. I am an artist, monsieur, but my art is squelched.”

“Is he not ill, then?”

“Ill? He is as well as I, but his stomach—oh! his stomach must be very empty. But he is stubborn—oh, mon Dieu! he is stubborn. He sends me, Falcoz, the pride of the École de Médecine, he sends me and my art to the devil. It is frightful, it is unendurable, it is outrageous!” And the fat doctor whirled his lace handkerchief over his perspiring brow. I laughed.

"Ah, you laugh, monsieur," he cried. "No doubt they will laugh too in Paris, but it is no laughing matter. I am an artist, monsieur, and my art is sacred. If I can do no more, I will bleed him by force."

I laughed again, but this time at the recollection of something I had said to the princesse, and an idea came to me.

"M. Falcoz," said I, "I can help you out. I am somewhat the worse for a fall from my horse, my ankle is sprained, my shoulder hurt, but my appetite is unimpaired. Fix me up, and tell M. le Prince you have a dead man who eats, and bring me to dine with him. A dead man with a good appetite will destroy his logic."

The fat Falcoz squeezed through the coach-door in his effort to embrace me.

"Look out for my ankle," I cried.

"Oh, monsieur! you will save me. I shall still be Falcoz, physician of the first rank. Like Henri IV., I shall reconquer Paris, and Paris is worth a lie. Philibert! Lusignan! aid for Monsieur le Vidame de Baudreuille!"

CHAPTER IV

THE DEAD WHO EAT

LUSIGNAN and Philibert assisted me to descend from the coach. "Here," said I, "I can walk perfectly well, if these fellows support me," for I felt better and meant to be about as soon as possible. I was determined that my stay at the Château de Pajou should be short, but while there I resolved to put the best face on affairs that I could. I have always found that a good front goes far.

The great entrance-hall received us in impressive grandeur, and leaning on the arms of Philibert and Lusignan, I passed through double lines of the prince's valets, and went up the grand staircase where I faced a splendid equestrian portrait of Charles VII., for in his day the Château de Pajou was a royal domain, and the monarch lodged his fair Agnes Sorel in the high tower. "Charles was more fortunate than I am," I thought. "There is no Agnes Sorel here for me, but a prospective wife, and an ugly one at that."

M. Falcoz had preceded us, and with a decidedly low bow, now waved his hand to the right. "The apartment of M. le Vidame," said he. I hobbled in and was soon stretched on the great bed under a green velvet canopy embroidered with the Pajou arms in gold. Then M. Falcoz set to work, and at the end of it all, when I was rubbed, bandaged and dressed, I was fain to acknowledge his claim to the title—physician of the first rank.

"You will hunt the boar in a week, monsieur," said he.

"I will hunt him in four days, Monsieur le Médecin."

"As you please, sir, and now I will go to M. le Prince."

I motioned to the valets to withdraw, and when we were alone, I said, "M. Falcoz, you must see Madame la Princesse. You must tell her what you propose to do," (Falcoz threw up his hands).

"Yes, yes, it is the only way. M. le Prince does not know me, but if he learns from her who I am, and he may have learned already," (Falcoz started), "you will have difficulty in persuading him that I am dead." Before Falcoz could reply, Philibert opened the door and announced, "Ma-

dame la Princesse." The princesse was still in her traveling-dress, and very much excited.

"Falcoz," she cried, "it is true, it is true indeed! He says he is dead, he drives me from him, he has eaten nothing, he will eat nothing. Falcoz, I am in despair. And you, you, the first physician in Paris, can you do nothing? Why don't you do something? Ah, M. de Baudreuille, I had quite forgotten you. I am so distressed."

M. Falcoz performed a complete pirouette and almost swept the floor with his hat as he saluted the princesse. His face was bright with perspiration, pride and advancing victory.

"Madame la Princesse," he cried, "I am, as you say, the first physician in Paris—I, Falcoz. Can I do nothing? I can. At first the horror of the situation rendered me dumb. I awaited your arrival. You came. I produce my plan. It demands tact, coolness, courage, but, madame, Falcoz never falters. When I saw M. le Vidame de Baudreuille, I said, 'Excellent!' When I examined him, I said, 'Superb!' When I reflected, I said, 'Magnificent!' M. le Prince de Pajou does not know M. le Vidame de Baudreuille—they shall become better acquainted. M. le Vidame has an excellent appetite—he shall satisfy it. M.

le Prince is dead—he shall see a dead man eat and profit by it. In short, madame, they shall dine delightfully together.”

“Well, I will be damned,” thought I, “the fellow appropriates my plan with the greatest sang froid.”

“Falcoz,” cried the princesse, “solve these riddles. What nonsense you talk!”

M. Falcoz repeated his bow.

“Madame la Princesse,” said he, “a physician of the first rank never talks nonsense—never, madame, never!—but, if madame no longer requires my services, I take my leave,” and he made a step toward the door. “Parbleu!” thought I, “the fellow has some wits after all.”

“Falcoz,” cried the princesse, “come back instantly. Do not abandon me in this dreadful situation. You alone can save M. le Prince. I am all attention, monsieur,—your plan, your plan!”

I have seen a fine fat harvest moon beaming brightly over the purple hills when I came late from the chase and encountered the wagons creaking slowly under their loads of hay as though they were loath to leave its brilliant beams for the darkness that yawned for them beneath the stable rafters. The face of M. Fal-

coz, physician of the first rank, reminded me of such a moon when he turned again and saluted the princesse.

"Madame," said he, "my plan is that of an artist. I propose that M. le Vidame, here, shall declare himself dead, and as such I will present him to M. le Prince. M. le Prince maintains that he himself is dead. I grant it and produce a dead man that he may enjoy his society. He maintains that dead men do not eat. I shall produce one who does. My demonstration gives his argument a coup de grâce, and after a slight chagrin at the failure of his logic, he will make a very good meal."

In spite of her anxiety the princesse laughed.

"And what do you say to this, M. de Baudreuille?" said she.

"I thought the plan very good from the start," I answered, looking at M. Falcoz, but Monsieur le Médecin was absorbed in regarding himself in a mirror on the toilet-table.

"He must not know you are the Vidame de Baudreuille," continued the princesse.

"Certainly not," said I.

"Oh, no, he would never believe you dead, you know, because you are to marry Mlle. Sophie."

This was sudden. I came very near shouting, "I will never have her!" and fortunately checked myself, but I wreaked my wrath on the gilded bell-cord which I pulled violently.

"Gentlemen," continued the princesse, "I leave you until the supper hour. M. Falcoz, if you succeed in this, the Princesse de Pajou will be your debtor." And the old lady, tired and anxious as she was and still showing traces of the dust of her hurried journey, saluted us with a charming smile. M. Falcoz sprang forward to open the door and bent double while she passed out.

"Now, monsieur," he cried, when we were alone, "confess that I have managed well."

"Without doubt," said I, "but it was I who gave you the plan which you have so pompously paraded as your own."

"You, monsieur? Ah, you are pleased to jest. You may have given me a stray thought, a little fugitive thought, but I fill up the rough outline. I evolve the victorious plan."

"Pish!" said I, "you think so, no doubt. Well, I will spend no time in argument, but suppose our fine plan, your fine plan I mean, fails. What then?"

"Fails?" cried the stout doctor, waving his arms, "it cannot fail."

"Suppose," said I, "that M. le Prince refuses to see the dead man who eats, what then?"

M. Falcoz appeared to collapse.

"Mon Dieu!" he cried, turning pale, "suppose he does. I never thought of that and it would be just like him too. What should we do then? Oh! what should we do then, monsieur?"

"I don't pretend to know," I answered. "I have merely given you a stray thought, a little fugitive thought. *You* must evolve the victorious plan."

"He will do it," cried M. Falcoz, parading helplessly about the apartment. "He will refuse. He is so stubborn. He will die. I shall become the laughing-stock of Paris. It is awful!"

"Yes," said I, shaking with laughter, "he will probably refuse, and if he dies, they will laugh at you in Paris. Oh, yes! the boys on the Pont Neuf, when they see you pass, will cry, 'Ah! it is M. Falcoz, physician of the first rank. How stout he is! When he attends, the patient dies of starvation—he eats for two.'"

"Spare me, monsieur!" cried the doctor, seizing his wig in both hands. "The plan is yours, monsieur, the plan is yours. Mine is the stray thought, the little fugitive thought. Oh! M. le Vidame de Baudreuille, do not abandon me now, do not abandon me now!"

I was shrieking with laughter, and when I could get breath, I answered, "Very good, I will not abandon you. Now, go and see M. le Prince and make him come."

"Ah! monsieur, that is glorious. Make him come—that was spoken like your father the Comte de Lannoy. Make him come—it is like Henri IV. at Ivry. See, monsieur, my chapeau, it has a white feather like Henri IV.'s. Monsieur, will you follow it?"

"With all my heart," I cried, laughing. "Tonight my oriflamme shall be the chapeau of M. Falcoz."

The doctor saluted me, but paused at the threshold.

"Victory!" he cried, pointing to his hat.

"Vive le chapeau!" I answered, and he vanished.

I fell back on the pillows and laughed again. "Parbleu!" said I, "I wish you success, M. le

Médecin. If you fail, my sport is spoiled." And then I was aware that the shapely silver-laced form of Philibert stood at the door.

"Did M. le Vidame ring?" he inquired.

"I? Ring? No, Philibert, you have been dreaming. Stay though, perhaps I did ring after all," I added, for I suddenly had a recollection of having had the bell-cord in my hands. "Come, Philibert, help me up. Here, give me your arm. Yes, I can stand alone. Place the fauteuil yonder by the fireplace. Now, dress my hair."

Philibert turned to the toilet-table and then began his work rapidly.

"What perfume will M. le Vidame have?" said he.

"Amber," I answered, thinking of Françoise.

In a short time Lusignan entered.

"Monsieur," said he, bowing, "M. Falcoz sends to inform you that supper is served."

"And M. le Prince?" I cried.

"M. le Prince will come with M. Falcoz, sir."

"Good. Your arm. Philibert, your arm also."

I stood up and leaning upon both valets, hobbled slowly down the grand staircase, through the wide hall where the Pajous past and present

looked down, with some surprise I thought, at my approach, then through a large salon empty and silent, hung with silver satin and blazing with candles as though for a fête, and so into the *salle à manger*. The apartment was superb, the lights brilliant, the flowers in profusion, the premier maitre d'hôtel and his six attendants in glittering liveries, but I was so hungry that I confess I saw little but the table. It was tempting enough to one who, like myself, was blessed with excellent health, had ridden hard and eaten nothing since déjeuner. There were *poulardes grasses, hêtoudeaux, perdrix à la sauce à l'espagnole, poulets gras en pâté grillés, livres de veau*, and much more that I cannot now recall. "Ah," said I, "the supper for the dead—the dead who eat." I sat down on a tabouret which Philibert brought forward. I would have preferred a fauteuil, but that was impossible in the presence of M. le Prince. Philibert and Lusignan departed, the attendants stood in line behind me, and the premier maitre d'hôtel, taking his white and silver baguette, went to announce to the Prince de Pajou that all was ready. Affairs seemed solemn enough now, when suddenly I broke out in a cold sweat. "Zounds!" thought I, "Who am

I? I cannot be myself, who am I to be?" for in the excitement of other things, we had quite overlooked that essential point. Then I remembered that I was dead, therefore I endeavored to think of appropriate people who were dead, but as fortune frowned, could only remember those who were very much alive. My meditation was not for long, for I heard the sonorous tones of the premier maitre d'hôtel announcing grandiloquently, "Monsieur le Prince is served."

I looked toward the door; the maitre d'hôtel advanced first, bearing his baguette, and then almost immediately, M. Falcoz, Madame la Princesse de Pajou and M. le Prince. Falcoz was beaming externally and wriggling internally, the princesse in grand toilet and blazing with rubies, smiling nervously, and Monsieur le Prince—I had eyes for him only and swept him at a glance. A little man not more than five feet one inch, with a great black wig which concealed all but the front of his face, shoes with tremendously high heels so that he appeared walking upon stilts, the whitest hands in the world, his fingers loaded with diamonds, a face wrinkled but absolutely without color, a nose like an eagle's beak, black eyes that never ceased to pass rapidly from one

object to another, bloodless lips set like a vise, a coat of purple velvet embroidered in gold and ribbons everywhere. He looked at me as much as to say, "What the devil are you doing here?" Fortunately my legs were below the table, for, had he seen my boots, I fancy he would have been taken with a fit at the breach of etiquette. M. Falcoz blazed the way.

"Monsieur le Prince," said he, "I have the honor to present to you a personage—a personage who disproves a theory the most plausible that has ever been. Charles I., monsieur, Charles I. of England maintained that the blood did not circulate, but M. Harvey, monsieur, M. Harvey, like myself a physiologist of the first rank—I have read his *Exercitatio Anatomica de Motu Cordis et Sanguinis*—M. Harvey, monsieur, proved that it did. The king was convinced, monsieur, the king was convinced. You are a dead man, Monsieur le Prince; it is a fact, an incontestable fact, but you walk, you speak, you think. Why then should you not eat? Because, Monsieur le Prince, you hold a theory the most plausible that has ever been, that dead men do not eat. It is, I repeat, a theory the most plausible that has ever been, and to the ordinary doctor it is unanswer-

able, but I, Falcoz, the first physician in Paris, I am an artist, monsieur. I rise where others fall, I pluck laurels from the lofty brow of victory where others find defeat—I, Falcoz, present to you, Monsieur le Prince, a dead man with a good appetite."

"Falcoz is a magnificent liar," thought I, "but he speaks the truth at the last."

The Prince de Pajou saluted me somewhat graciously.

"Is it true you are dead, sir?"

"Quite true, Monsieur le Prince," I answered, rising as well as I could. "I am dead—with hunger," I added to myself, glancing at the table. The prince seated himself in one armchair while the princesse occupied another.

"M. Falcoz," he cried, "the proof!"

The maitre d'hôtel placed before the prince a dish of delicious soup—*pigeon de voliere*—and another before me. I bowed to the prince and raised my spoon. Ah! I can taste that beautiful soup yet; it did not take me long to finish it. The prince touched nothing, but eyed me curiously. Then we had a *perdrix au parmesan*, equally fine. Mine soon disappeared, but the prince's was removed untasted. Falcoz was behind the prince's chair, and I could see the drops

of sweat standing on his brow, while the princess opened and shut her fan without knowing what she did. The next course was *livre de veau*, delightfully dressed.

"Monsieur le Prince," said I, saluting him, "this is magnificent. We do not sup so well in Paradise."

The prince's fingers closed gradually about his fork.

"Is it true, monsieur? You eat well. Do all the dead in Paradise have equal appetites?"

"Ah, monsieur, those who have been dead longer than I eat twice as much."

"Is it possible? Do you know I have been dead three days myself."

"I can hardly believe it, Monsieur le Prince, for if it were true, you would eat more. I have been dead but one, and surely I ought not to take precedence of you."

"Precedence!" cried the prince, striking the table in sudden fury, "no! monsieur, no! No man takes precedence of me save the King and the Princes of the Blood, least of all you, Monsieur—Monsieur—who the devil are you?"

"I am," I began, and then grew red and stuck fast.

"Monsieur le Prince," cried M. Falcoz, "he is——" And then he too was stuck and fairly danced behind the chair, while Madame la Princesse beat the table nervously with her jeweled fingers.

"Monsieur," she cried, "he is——"

"Parbleu!" I shouted in my excitement, "we dead men in Paradise don't remember the names we bore when alive. Stomachs give titles there. I am Monsieur Pigeon-Potage, because I love it."

Six eyes were on the prince.

"Well, Monsieur Pigeon-Potage," said he, fiercely, "you shall not take precedence of me, the Prince de Pajou—you a dead man of one day! Félix, a glass of wine!" and the prince whirled his fork into the *livre de veau*.

I thought Falcoz would embrace the maitre d'hôtel then and there; as for the Princesse de Pajou, the old lady smiled upon me most bewitchingly and could hardly refrain from clapping her hands.

"No!" cried the Prince de Pajou, attacking the *livre de veau* as only a man with a three days' fast inside of him could attack it, "no man takes precedence of me. Eating is a matter of eti-

quette in Paradise, is it? I shall be there, as always, le premier Prince."

The *livres de veau* disappeared in a twinkling, and we attacked the *poulets gras*.

"Ha!" cried the prince, suddenly, "The Duc de Viefville des Essars, that braggart, that glutton,—will he dare to take precedence of me in Paradise?"

"If he can eat more, monsieur, I fear he will," I answered.

"Mon Dieu!" cried the Prince de Pajou, "if I thought that! If I thought Viefville des Essars could take precedence of me in Paradise, I would rather be damned."

"Oh! Monsieur le Prince," cried M. Falcoz, waving his arms, "be assured that 'God will think twice before damning a man of your quality.'"

"I dare say, I dare say," said the prince, mollified for an instant, "but Viefville des Essars—never! I will eat more than he," and the Prince de Pajou made havoc with the *poulet gras*. We passed to the *poulardes grasses*.

"You shall hear of his insolence," cried the prince, between mouthfuls, "it was at the Sorbonne; de Bouillon's son was to sustain a thesis.

I entered and placed myself behind the seats reserved for the Princes of the Blood, when, presto! arrives M. le Duc de Viefville des Essars and seats himself immediately in front of me. What madness! I said not a word, oh, no! I said not a word, but I watched my chance. He turned his head to speak to the Cardinal de Lemoine. Quick as a flash I seized an armchair and planted it before him so that he was imprisoned and could not stir—then I sat down in it. The thing was done and perceived at the same instant. He made a great hubbub; I would not budge. ‘Monsieur le Prince,’ cried the cardinal, ‘Monsieur le Prince, I pray you’—‘No!’ I cried, immovable as granite, ‘the Duc de Viefville des Essars has forgotten his position; he must be taught it,’ and I squared my feet firmly on the floor. Oh, how he fumed! It was glorious. They tried all means. De Coislin came running; ‘Monsieur le Prince, there is some one at the door to see you,’ he cried, ‘business of the first importance.’ ‘There is no business so important as that of teaching M. de Viefville des Essars what he owes to me,’ said I. ‘Nothing will make me go from this place unless M. le Duc, whom you see behind me, goes away first.’ The

Prince de Raux arrived; 'Monsieur,' he cried, 'if you will free M. le Duc, he shall leave the hall at once, I guarantee it.' 'Come, come,' said I, 'no juggling tricks. You promise he shall go?' 'I promise.' With that I jumped up and pulled away the chair. 'Go away, sir! Go away, sir!' I cried scornfully to Vieffville des Essars. He fled in confusion and jumped into his coach. Ha! ha! it was glorious."

"Indeed it was, Monsieur le Prince," cried M. Falcoz, who during the recital had appeared soaked in admiration, "glorious! glorious!"

"Yes," said the prince, waving his white hand covered with dazzling diamonds, "you shall hear further. The same evening the Princes of the Blood came to compliment me, and my house was full of visitors until a late hour. Was it not so, madame?" And for the first time the prince turned toward the Princesse de Pajou, whom until that moment he had entirely ignored, and bowed graciously.

"It was, monsieur," said she, smiling, "and moreover the regent praised your conduct highly. The last time I was at the Louvre, Her Majesty said to me, 'Madame, convey my respects to M. le Prince de Pajou, and tell him Anne of Austria

is proud of a prince who has humbled M. de Viefville des Essars.'"

The Prince de Pajou sprang from his chair and making the princesse the most beautiful bow imaginable, he raised her hand to his lips and kissed it. At that moment he was perfectly charming, for as I have said, when he pleased he could captivate. I looked at the princesse. She seemed supremely happy and there were tears in her eyes. "Dear old lady!" thought I, "she loves him still. She would give her soul to keep him like this always." It was a brilliant flash of what the man could be when he chose, and the next instant he was back in his chair with his mouth full of *poularde grasse*.

"Come, come, Monsieur Pigeon-Potage, eat, eat!" he cried, "your mouthfuls loiter on their way."

The fact was that I was already full to bursting, for I had gorged myself at the start to lead him on, while the prince, who had touched nothing until the third course, was only well started.

"What have we here?" he cried, "olives? Ah, I will race you on olives," and he began ravenously, drinking wine copiously from time

to time. I was obliged to keep up as well as I could, thinking at every mouthful I should burst, and then—horrors!—the *perdrix à la sauce à l'espagnole* sailed into sight and great porcelain dishes loaded with fruits and sweets.

“Where is your good appetite, monsieur?” cried the prince. “M. Falcoz, where is his good appetite?”

I looked helplessly at Falcoz, who shrugged his shoulders and raised his eyebrows half-mockingly.

“Monsieur le Prince,” said I, “like M. de Viefville des Essars, I am vanquished, but of one thing I am certain—you will take precedence of any prince or peer in Paradise.”

And then, like a clap of thunder out of a clear sky, Philibert, throwing open the double doors, announced pompously, “Monsieur le Comte de Lannoy!”

CHAPTER V

MAN TO MAN

THE Princesse de Pajou, M. Falcoz and I exchanged glances, there was time for nothing more, and then the comte's splendid figure filled the doorway, his great shoulders superb in their trappings of blue and silver and covered lightly by his long hair, his handsome face bronzed by the sun and wind of many a chase, made martial by his proud mustache. How well he walked! I have said he walked like the king—yes, like the king, and when that is said, all is said. I have seen many great lords in my day, but my father has always personified to me the grand seigneur. I felt all this as he came, and yet I had a supreme desire to drop under the table, to rush from the room, to be anywhere out of his sight. I loved him well, but *then* I feared him more. It must have been a curious picture that he saw when he raised his head from the majestic bow he gave the prince and princesse at the threshold. The great apartment ablaze with light, the flower-laden table, the gorgeous maitre

d'hôtel rigid as a statue, the stiff-necked attendants in livery, equally motionless, the fat Falcoz performing all kinds of contortions behind the chair of the prince, the prince, half-rising in salute, resting his glittering fingers on the table, the princesse bowing with grace but trembling, and I, his son and heir, flushed and furious, seated at the table, too much confused to move one way or another. It lasted but a second, and then my father perceived Falcoz.

The stout doctor was waving his arms violently, pointing now to me, now to the prince, and placing his finger on his lips as if to enjoin silence. It all flashed over me—Falcoz and the princesse were quite as anxious as I was that the prince should not learn the truth. My father saw me, and the princesse recovered herself.

“Ah, Monsieur le Comte,” said she, extending her hand, “I welcome you.”

The comte raised her fingers gallantly to his lips, and turned to the prince.

“Monsieur,” said he, “good-evening.”

The prince was flushed with wine.

“Good-evening, M. le Comte,” said he, and then seating himself, he cried, “a plate for M. le Comte de Lannoy.”

"Thank you, no," said the comte, "I have supped already. You sup like Her Majesty the Regent at ten, but we humbler folk sup earlier."

"You are jesting, monsieur," said the prince, laughing, and in truth the words "humbler folk" from the lips of my proud father were merry enough. I might have laughed myself under other circumstances. "The devil is to pay now," thought I, wriggling on the tabouret, "what next? what next?" I was so nervous that I felt I must do something, say something. Prudence warned me to keep my mouth shut and let events take their course—good advice, but hard to follow. Evidently my father had caught something of what Falcoz intended to convey, for he did not glance at me again.

"To what do I owe the honor of this visit, M. le Comte?" continued the prince, finishing another glass of wine.

"To my desire to consummate the marriage of your daughter and my son, monsieur."

"Ah! yes. Your son is called—let me see——"

"The Vidame de Baudreuille, monsieur," said the princesse, passing her lace handkerchief quickly through her slender fingers.

"Quite true. Well, I give the girl a hundred thousand crowns—that's a good dot, eh?"

The comte drew himself up proudly.

"I give my son two hundred thousand crowns," said he. "He marries Mlle. Sophie because she is a Pajou."

"Ah!" cried the prince, somewhat the worse for wine, "magnificent! She's not over-hand-some though. Mon Dieu! she's not over-hand-some, but she's a Pajou. I have five dukes who would take her for half the money."

The comte flushed.

"Take care, Monsieur le Prince, take care," said he, "one of them may get her yet."

I almost jumped from the tabouret with delight, and then my eye rested on the princesse. "Ah!" thought I, "it's too bad. She loves her ugly Sophie. The prince has cut her."

"Well," cried the prince, filling his glass, "the Vidame de Baudreuille! I drink his health, monsieur."

The maitre d'hôtel presented a glass of wine to the comte. The prince rose and holding the table to steady himself, cried loudly, "The Vidame de Baudreuille!"

"The Vidame de Baudreuille!" cried my father, and the glasses were drained.

"Ha!" said the prince, advancing from the table, "what sort of a fellow is he, this vidame of yours, a clown? a knave?"

"Take care, monsieur, take care," cried the comte, "your jest is waxing rough."

"Speak up! speak up!" cried the prince, excitedly, "speak up! monsieur. With his two hundred thousand crowns he should have her even if he were a bastard!"

The comte was crimson.

"How dare you! How dare you trifle with me, monsieur!" he cried. "Your jest has gone too far. There is the Vidame de Baudreuille!" and he pointed his finger at my head.

Falcoz threw up his hands and collapsed, the princesse trembled, while Monsieur le Prince regarded me with an astonished stare. I dare say he had totally forgotten my existence.

"Rubbish!" said he, steadying himself by holding a chair, "rubbish! That fellow is dead. He is—Monsieur—Monsieur—Monsieur—Potage, and Falcoz here—Falcoz—what the devil are you bobbing up and down for?—Falcoz said he had a good appetite, and—Falcoz is a liar."

"I tell you, monsieur," cried the Comte de Lannoy, stamping his foot, "that is my son, the Vidame de Baudreuille. My son, do you hear? You know him. You have been supping with him. How came he here?" and then with tremendous emphasis, "Falcoz is not the only liar, Monsieur le Prince de Pajou!"

"Aha!" shouted the prince, striking the chair in fury, "I have been tricked. I have been trapped. It is a plot. You are all in it. Falcoz!"

I seized the doctor's coat as he passed and held him. "Shield the princesse," I whispered, then I let him go.

"So, sir!" cried the prince, livid with passion, "this is your dead man who eats—wretch, you have dared! I tell you dead men do not eat. You have tricked me. It is your plot. It is your plan. But wait! wait! wait! I'll fix you! I'll fix you! You shall rot in the Bastille! You shall rot in the Bastille!"

Falcoz, squirming like an eel, was bent double.

"Monsieur," he cried, "mercy! No! no! monsieur, the plan was not mine, the plan was not mine. I am an artist, monsieur, not a conspirator. Oh! I'll tell you truly I could never think of anything like this. This is beyond me,

quite beyond. My part was a mere nothing, monsieur, oh! a mere nothing at all! I cannot evolve an idea, monsieur, I cannot! I cannot! The plan was not mine!"

"Miserable sycophant!" I hissed, "and thus he shields the princesse!"

The prince turned on his heel and strode across the room.

"You!" he shouted, seizing the princesse by the arm, "You did it! I know it. Don't deny it. How did the vidame come, when did he come, how did he come? Speak! madame, speak! You trick me, do you? By G—d! madame, speak!"

"Monsieur!" cried the princesse, imploringly, "I can explain everything."

"No!" shouted the prince, "make your explanations to Falcoz, to the devil, to any fool you please. Answer my questions, you jade, answer my questions! How did he come, when did he come, why did he come? Are you tongue-tied?"

"I found him on the road near——"

And then in a flash, before any one could move, the prince struck her with his clenched fist fairly on the cheek, his diamonds gashing

her skin. She would have fallen but for the Comte de Lannoy. His hand was up again—I saw his diamonds blaze!—but I was on my feet, and in a tone I would have blushed to use even to a valet, I roared “Stop! Prince de Pajou!”

The prince started as though stung and faced me foaming.

“For shame! Monsieur le Prince,” I cried, “for shame! I’ll answer your questions. Oh! rest assured I’ll answer your questions now. How did I come?—in the coach of the princesse. When did I come?—at five o’clock. Why did I come?—because the princesse found me thrown from my horse and lying on the road near Mion. She was kind enough to bring me here because she could not go to the Château de Lannoy for she was hastening to you. She would not abandon me, she would not be late to you. As for this plot, the plan, monsieur, is mine and mine alone, though Falcoz here was quick at times to claim what merit there might be in it. It was a silly plot, a shallow plot, but fit to fool a fool like you, Monsieur le Prince! The princesse, through her love for you, was party to it to save you from your mad hallucination. She trembled for the future of your folly. She loves you still for

all your wild career, and she's the woman you have struck! You are an old man, Monsieur le Prince, and it is well you are. Were you a young one, Prince de Pajou though you be, I'd fling defiance in your teeth and fight it out with swords! I told you once in sport that you'd take precedence of any prince or peer in Paradise, but this I'll tell you now in truth— You will take precedence of any prince or peer in hell!"

The prince was raging up and down like a wild beast.

"What does he mean? What does he mean?" he shrieked.

My father surrendered the princesse to the maitre d'hôtel and came forward.

"I'll tell you, monsieur, I'll tell you," said he, with superb grace. "The Vidame de Baudreuille—'sdeath! he's done it well—has just declined your daughter."

CHAPTER VI

COMTE DE LANNOY

WE came down the great stone staircase of the Château de Pajou—my father and I—to the comte's coach which, surrounded by mounted torch-bearers, awaited us in the courtyard. His arm was locked in mine and he supported me, for he had waved away Philibert and the other valets who presented themselves. And so we drove at full speed through the still night, the wood of St. Geneviève flaring now and then by the sudden light of the torches, the dark bare fields covered here and there with the curved stacks of sheaves, and from time to time as we passed the *sinaux*, I caught snatches of a threshing-song sung in torchlight, to the measured strokes of the flails, by the dust-enveloped peasants, whose tax-day was due and who had not yet turned their wheat into money:

“Ho! companions wield the flail!
Beat the husks and labor gayly!
Whate'er comes I never fail
On my sweetheart to think daily.

Poverty may woes entail,
Yet to her my thoughts turn daily.
Ho! companions, wield the flail!
Beat the husks and labor gayly."

Thus we came again to the Château de Lannoy. My father's arm supported me as we ascended the staircase, and we went side by side to my apartment, where the comte, his arm about me still, led me to the fireplace above which the portrait of my mother hung. There she was with her white jeweled hands and her great ruff, smiling kindly at us with her soft eyes. The comte looked at her long. "To strike a woman!" said he, at last, "worst of all—his wife! Did I ever that to thee?" Then he faced me. "Thou art a Lannoy after my own heart," he cried. "By my life! I'm proud of thee!" and taking my face in his hands, he kissed me on both cheeks—a thing he had not done for twenty years. Then ringing for Bazille, "Good-night, my son," said he. "Remember this; thou shalt marry when and where thou wilt," and thus he left me. And so I lost a wife and found a father.

I was as good as my word to Falcoz, and in four days followed the boar again. Ah! the hunts of my youth! How many mighty meets I

have attended since then in the forests of Marly, Versailles, Compiègne and Fontainebleau! The *grand veneur*, the *capitaine général*, lieutenants, pages, *piquers*, *valets des chiens*, *fauconniers*, *gardes à cheval des chasses*, *gentilshommes de la vénerie*, bright as birds of paradise; dogs the swiftest, the most beautiful; horses Arabs would have deified; equipages the lightest, the most glittering, covered with gilding, filled with the beauties of the first court in Europe; the grand noblesse brave in blue *justaucorps*, red-lined and silver-laced, worn only by the king's command; the king himself, the light and life of all, his diamond buckle blazing 'neath his plumes, and all this pulsing, throbbing, thrilling whirl of pride, of pomp, of life, of love, with blowing horns, with baying hounds, with shouting men, with snorting steeds, thundering in full cry beneath the giant oaks, while in advance—aye! in advance—His Majesty the stag, the forest's stately sovereign, tosses his proud antlers in defiance to the Grand Monarque!—such is the king's hunt to-day, the most splendid spectacle in France. And yet so strange the human heart, that I, amid it all, have longed still for the wide wood of St. Geneviève, longed still with my bright spurs

upon my heels, my good le Conquérant between my knees, and Belle and Ponne before me, to race as I had raced of yore.

Come, come, my wandering thoughts, whither would you lead me? And yet I know well why you wander; it is because I shrink from that which is to come.

I see the great comte yet, the day we heard the news of Nördlingen. His foot was in the stirrup when the letter came. He broke the seal, and I could see how deeply he was moved.

“Here,” said he to me, “is news, the best and worst. A splendid victory for M. de Turenne and M. le Prince de Condé, so far so good, but mark thou this, my son—a splendid victory for Mazarin. And who is he?—this low-born priest, become prime minister through a woman’s favor! His head sits high enough upon his shoulders now, I fancy. Oh, yes! he thinks himself already Richelieu, brow-beating all the French nobility. He shall cry quits ere long. God knows that Richelieu was bad enough; still he was French, he saw the light in Paris, but this man Mazarin—comedian!—what country spewed him up? Italy! a land of priests and beggars! Mon Dieu! have we no heads in France with brains in

them, that we must call Italians in to kick us? The king! the king! the king! the power of the king! that's all we hear! Who howls so loud?"

"'Tis not the king, mon père," said I.

"Oh! no," he cried, "it's Mazarin! A king of seven years—and Mazarin! And if this fellow Mazarin can have his way, and the young king of seven years picks up his sceptre when he's seventeen, there will not be a lord in France to stand erect before him. They'll crowd his chamber like a pack of cringing curs, they'll lick the varnish from his palace-floors!—pray God! I do not live to see it."

"Mazarin has not crushed them all, mon père," said I. "There is the Duc de Beaufort."

"Yes, Beaufort. He has Henri IV.'s blood in his veins, albeit that it came through Gabrielle. The blood is good, the Bourbon blood is good, and grown very great through Richelieu, but I can tell thee this, my son,—La France was proud of her Lannoys before she ever knew a Bourbon."

Then mounting, he rode away to the hunt, the apogee of manly strength and pride.

At night, they brought him home, gored by a boar, his entrails ripped, fainting, bleeding,

dying. Ah! what a night! I shudder now to think of it. Two candles burned beside the bed. I can still see the sacraments; I can still hear the prayers for the dying; I can still face the black-frocked Père Frolois giving him absolution. And I, beside the bed, held him by the hand, and felt him slipping from me, slowly but surely. So brave he was, so calm, so firm, and every breath was agony!

I waved the holy man away; he had done all he could, and then we two were left alone—the comte and I.

“Stand up, dear son,” said he, “that I may see thee. Ah! thou art fine and tall indeed. Thou’lt be a proud Lannoy, a good one, and the last—yes, the last, till thou beget them. May they be the same!”

Then when I could no longer keep from sobbing: “Come, come, dear son, this is not right. A Lannoy never falters under fire. I leave thee, mon petit, a splendid name, a proud name. I have seen much in my day; thou wilt see much in thine. Uphold thy name and France. Ah, France!—and Mazarin! Well, if it comes, I shall not see it. I have but one regret; I knew thee—late.”

Two candles burned beside the bed; one flickered and went out, and in the great apartment with its crimson hangings, I stood alone—and face to face with fate—Comte de Lannoy!

CHAPTER VII

THE ROAD TO PARIS

SHORTLY after my father's funeral, Bazille brought me a letter from the Vicomte de Noailles. Dear dead Noailles! there were few like you in France; I loved you like a brother. I broke the seal and read:

MONSIEUR:

Yesterday M. le Prince de Pajou asked the regent for the governorship of Blaye, now vacant through the death of M. le Comte, so recent, so deplorable. Her Majesty made answer: "Is there not a son?" So for the moment all is well, but M. le Prince is raising earth and heaven. My dear comte, come to Paris at once and see the regent, and also your well-wisher,

NOVION DE NOAILLES.

"Aha!" said I, "Monsieur le Prince has not forgotten the dead who eat. Bazille!" I cried, "we ride to Paris. Be ready in an hour."

We clattered out of the courtyard of the Château de Lannoy, and I glanced a swift farewell at

it over my horse's crupper, for, with a sudden spirit of prophecy, I felt it would be long before I saw its high towers and its wide moat again. We passed the mill of Mion at a canter, and my eye caught the white stone, which by my order marked le Conquérant's last stable. I drew rein, and raising my hat, "Bazille!" I cried, "*Hommage au courage malheureux!*" Then we set spurs, and the Château de Lannoy, the mill of Mion, and le Conquérant's white stone rolled into the land of recollection.

The August sun shed golden splendor on the harvest fields where the toil-tanned peasants, lined beside a ridge or furrow, under the goading eye of the overseer, reaped rapidly after the leader of the *ordon*, or with bare backs and breasts tossed the wide sheaves to women on the wagons. We passed the bridge of Belles Fontaines, and the land of my youth was behind me; but the pace did not slacken, and with my head full of Paris and the Prince de Pajou, my heart high and my proud title resting lightly on my shoulders, I rode to meet my fate at Athis-Mons.

We pulled up at the inn of Athis-Mons. "Ha!" said I, taking its measure, "good cheer is small here, I warrant."

To-day we travel well in France and go from Calais to Paris in six days, from Paris to Lyons in nine, and live well, but things were different in my youth, for then the roads were rough, the inns vile, the robbers rampant—God help the unarmed man!

I am not fastidious like the Duc de Vyau de la Garde, who carries his bed about with him, nor a sybarite like the Marquis de Maisonpré, who has ice to cool his wine, but an inn should mean something more than *loge-qui-peut*.

“Landlord!” I cried, dismounting, “landlord!”

A little man with wig awry, a fat paunch, wooden shoes, and hands not over-clean, came puffing.

“Monsieur,” he cried with a bobbing bow, “you do my house much honor.”

“More than I do myself, I fancy, by stopping at your sty. What do you call your proud château?”

“The ‘Poulet d’Or,’ monsieur.”

“Ah, the ‘Golden Chicken’—the name is more inviting than the thing it covers. You’re a fat Midas, but I fancy when you show your score, I’ll find you turn your chickens into gold twice over. All landlords that I ever knew were rogues.”

"Not I, monsieur, not I! I am an honest man and a poor one."

"You and your 'Poulet d'Or' are then a perfect pair. But come, my stout *propriétaire d'auberge*, bustle about. I want a dinner and the best you have, so make your 'Chicken' lay."

"Alas! monsieur," he cried, wiping his greasy brow, "I have nothing in the house."

"What, fool! are you a liar and a rogue as well? Pish! I smell cooking," and shoving him aside, I entered and glanced about.

"Ha," said I, "what have we here? A leg of mutton and a capon, roasting royally. Come, serve them up, you knave."

The landlord, who had run after me, clasped his hands and cried in fright, "No! no! monsieur. I cannot, I dare not. That is spoken for, monsieur. Oh! by St. Jude, that is taken by a gentleman already here, and I have nothing more."

"Tonnerre, you fool!" I cried, for I was hungry, "there's quite enough for two, so stop your babbling and serve us both."

The fat landlord's teeth chattered.

"I cannot, monsieur. I tell you I dare not, monsieur. He's ordered them both, monsieur,"

—then lowering his voice—“Oh! he’s a man who gives one chills in August. I fear him, monsieur; if he were the devil himself, I could not fear him more.”

“Come, come,” said I, “no grandame’s tales. Show me this fellow, this glutton, who must needs eat a leg of mutton and a capon at a sitting. I’ll bring him to reason.”

The landlord did not wait to be told twice, for he saw the chance to shift responsibility.

“If monsieur will follow me?” said he, bowing toward a dark staircase.

“Oh, yes,” I answered, laughing, “I’ll follow you—to your devil.”

We reached the landing. The landlord opened a door suddenly, and keeping well on the outside of it, pinned himself against the wall, and cried through the crack, “Monsieur, a gentleman!” Then wriggling out behind me, he disappeared down the stairs. I entered a small, dirty room in the centre of which stood a massive fellow, who had leaped to his feet at the landlord’s words. His wide boots fell in folds at the knees, his dress was black, and he wore a gold belt that held his sword, while a gray chapeau with a threatening black plume sat jauntily on the side

of his head. His hair curled about his shoulders and framed a face by no means ugly—in truth he had as straight a nose as one could wish to see, and an expression of disdain and defiance not easily matched. I envied him his mustaches; they were waxed to his ears. One hand was on his sword; the other at his belt, fingering a pistol. “Aha!” thought I, “a swashbuckler and a good one.” I saluted the fellow without taking my eyes off him, and he returned the compliment in kind and with a grace that surprised me.

“Monsieur,” said I, “I’ve stopped for dinner at the ‘Poulet d’Or,’ but here I find that dinners are diminutive and larders light. The knave below informs me that all he has is on the spit for you, but luckily that all is quite enough for both of us, and so I beg to share your dinner and expense.”

“And what if I refuse, sir?” said he, gruffly.

“I think you’ll not do that, monsieur.”

“I think I shall, sir.”

“You are in earnest?”

“Quite.”

“Then, sir,” said I, for my blood was up,
“then, sir, I’ll help myself.”

He roared with laughter.

"That's good!" he cried, "sacré! that's good. I'd like to see you do it."

I was furious now.

"You'll see it soon enough," said I, "but I am not a glutton. When I am done, you may find something left to feed on."

He roared again.

"Oh! this is sport," he cried, "oh! this is unexpected sport. I ran three men through yesterday before their jaws had spit out half the stuff that yours have done, but you're a pretty puppy and amuse me."

I was red with rage.

"The puppy's teeth are cut!" I shouted, drawing my sword, "I'll carve the mutton, but I'll carve you first."

"With all my heart!" he cried, "I long to rip you up," and his sword leaped at the word—zounds! a long one.

"And now," I cried, "on guard!"

"On guard!" he hissed, his laugh gone, his eyes gleaming like those of a hungry hyena.

The steel clashed, the fight was on. Quick and agile as a cat and with an arm like iron, he pressed me hard—mon Dieu! he pressed me hard, but I set my teeth the more firmly. I held

him, I held him; I drove him, I drove him. His eyes flashed surprise. He lunged, I parried. Our breath came hard, our sweat soaked us, but the swords rang clear and true. He lunged again savagely, I leaped back, but his blade cut my left shoulder.

“You bleed, monsieur,” he sneered.

“As you will do ere long,” I answered, coldly, and watched my chance. I drove him toward the wall, he was hard pressed, but foiled me by a lightening turn. “This is serious, indeed,” I thought, “who——” We heard the distant sound of firearms. He started, I lunged, and though he leaped back as I did so, my blade cut his cheek.

“You bleed, monsieur,” said I.

“I’ll cut your entrails out and stamp on them!” he roared.

And then we heard the galloping of horses, the shouts of men, and the reports of pistols. He edged toward the door; I saw his purpose and pressed him the harder, but he fought like the devil himself, I could not stop him, and with a bound, he was gone and leaping down the staircase. “Coward!” I shouted, “come back, you knave! come back, you cur!” and springing

down the stairs, I rushed through the inn and out into the road. There was a sight indeed!—a coach and six approaching, at a tearing gallop, the postillions in red livery laced with gold, shouting with fright and rage and beating the proud Norman horses with their whips, the outriders to the rear, turning in their saddles to fire as they rode, and in hot pursuit, four mounted men, dressed like my late antagonist, gray chapeaux and all. They came hard, but were losing ground, and then I saw him—the man my sword had cut—leap to the roadside, his sword in one hand, his pistol in the other. There was a quick flash, a loud report, the off-horse of the leaders reeled, stumbled, fell, dragging down the other, and with a confusion of horses and of men, terrible to see, the coach was stopped.

I ran forward shouting, “Bazille! Bazille!” but the faithful fellow was already at my side. I caught a flash of women’s faces, one full of terror, the other pale, proud and beautiful. “At them! Bazille,” I called, “at them!” and then I faced my foe.

“Coward! madman!” I cried. “I see your blood, and I’ll see more of it. On guard! on guard!”

“What devil spit you out of hell to block my game!” he roared. “Pibrac! Rouÿ! Elbhecq! carve me the valets! I’ll aid you soon, when I have fried this toad. On guard, you whelp! on guard!”

And thus our steel struck again, while my ears were full of a confused clash of shouts and shots and swords as Pibrac and his crew battled with the outriders and Bazille. The fight in the inn was stern enough, but it was idle sport compared to the fight now, when the bright blades, like blood-hounds on the scent, sought out a human heart. I had an inkling now of whom I faced,—a brigand, a bold bohemian—aye, a bold one, who would stop a coach at the very threshold of Athis-Mons—a swift swordsman too. I had cried “coward,” but I saw my error. He had larger game in view than I, yet all his well-laid plans were jeopardized by me; he knew it, and the thought stung him to madness. He lunged, he lunged, he lunged! for he longed to be done with me, but there was no lack of elbow-room now, and I foiled his thrusts rapidly. Then I pressed him. Again he lunged in tierce terrifically, a quick leap saved me, but his sword severed my shoulder-knot. His brows contracted,

his lips spread, so that I saw his teeth through which his breath hissed. I caught him on the arm—it was a good clean cut. He fell back a step, and I became aware that the women had dismounted from the coach. Their eyes were on us, that I knew although I could not look, and then he rushed at me, and with a twist blinding in its velocity, struck my sword from my hand. I leaped back, my head whirling, but before he could reach me, before his bright blade could pierce my breast, as quick as light, a soft warm hand touched mine—my God! my sword, I knew not how, my sword was mine again!

“That stroke!” I cried, “that stroke shall be your last!”

He answered with an oath, the foulest in hell’s lexicon, and steel struck steel again. Ha! his endurance now was sorely tried; I saw it, I saw it! and I? The magic of a woman’s hand had changed an age! I fought in France, but fought no longer in the France of Louis Quartorze. It was the Age of Chivalry, the France of Charlemagne, and I a paladin-peer! Fight? Aye! as Roland fought at Roncesvalles, and if need be fight one against a score! And who was he to stand before me? I drove him—aye! with my

blood bounding in my veins, I drove him—drove him back and broke his guard and sent my swift steel through his neck and saw him fall and leaped upon him and hurled my red blade through his heart before I stopped!

He lay his length, bloody and distorted, and I drew out my sword, then turning I faced the coach. I shall never forget it! They were both young, but one more matronly stood with clasped hands, her fright and fear still in her eyes; the other—oh! the other!—her shapely head set proudly on her shoulders, her splendid figure regal with animation and the bright flush of excitement burning her soft cheeks. And did I doubt who gave me back my sword? I bowed—I venture that the king himself has never done it better—and I said, “I thank you for my life, mademoiselle.”

“Ah, thank your good right arm, monsieur,” said she, smiling, “I did only what any woman would have done for one who battled for her.”

“No, mademoiselle, not any woman, for were that true, La France would be a second Rome, the mistress of the world.”

“You turn a compliment as you turn your blade, monsieur, victoriously. My hand!”

I bent my knee and kissed it and was loath to let it go.

"And whom have we to thank, monsieur, for our deliverance?" cried the elder, coming forward.

"The Comte de Lannoy, madame."

"Thank God! a nobleman. I am the Comtesse de Frontenac. Mademoiselle and I were on our way to Choisy when these bandits set upon us. Good God! I have lived years of terror in the last half hour, and Mademoiselle—mon Dieu! she was as calm as at the play."

"It was a play, Madame la Comtesse, a tragedy à la Corneille. 'Tis strange His Eminence permits such plays almost at the gates of Paris."

"Quite so," said Mademoiselle. "In future I shall ask the regent for a guard. Ma foi! bohemians are better on the boards of the Palais Royal than on the road to Choisy."

I glanced about: Bazille had given one of the highwaymen a *coup de grâce*, the outriders two more, the fourth had disappeared.

"St. Denis!" said I, "we are four, and they are four, but we stand and they cool their backs upon the ground; it is St. Bartholomew come again. Madame la Comtesse, if you'll take my

hand, you shall be Catherine de Medici for the nonce—pray pardon the invidious comparison—and we'll survey the field."

"No, no, monsieur, I've seen enough."

"Lead on, monsieur," said Mademoiselle, "I'll follow you."

My heart leaped at the word; I had not dared to ask it. We came to where Bazille stood, binding up his arm.

"This is Bazille, mademoiselle," said I, "my faithful valet. His sword is sure and strikes home. Ah, he pricked you, did he?"

"A mere scratch, Monsieur le Comte."

I saw that it was something more than that.

"My friend," said Mademoiselle, "I thank you."

Oh! the sweetness of "I thank you" and the way she said it! The honest fellow was radiant. We came to where her own people were, and her eyes lighted up. "You," said she to one, "I make *écuyer*," and to the other, "You shall be *écuyer cavalcadour*. My hand!" They knelt and kissed it in the most charming fashion.

Then turning to me, laughing: "This is better than Catherine de Medici, monsieur, is it not so?"

"By all the saints!" I cried, "it is. 'Tis Jeanne d'Albret who gave us Henri IV."

"I thank you for that, monsieur," said she, and then we reached the coach again. The postillions were up, but there were only four horses now for they had cut loose the remaining leader and mounted him. The newly-made equerries, too, were in their saddles. Departure was at hand.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PASSING OF HOPE

MADAME LA COMTESSE DE FRONTENAC was already seated in the coach. I bowed and presented my hand to Mademoiselle. She entered also. The comtesse leaned toward me. "Monsieur le Comte de Lannoy," said she, "I am not brave like Mademoiselle, I would I were, but I am grateful. Believe me I will not forget," and all this with a most charming smile.

"Monsieur," said Mademoiselle, in a tone impossible to describe, "I, too, will not forget."

I kept my eyes upon her, and for once my ready tongue failed me. I could only blush and bow—it is surprising how the heart can play the devil with the head. I would have given worlds to have detained her, but the new *écuyer cavalcadour* cried, "To Choisy!" and the coach started. But as they passed, her hand—the fair white hand that I had kissed—flung me a scarf, a soft white scarf with a deep bordering of golden fringe. I caught it, and she was gone,

postillions and equerries galloping like mad. And then a hundred things flashed through my brain, a hundred bright and brilliant things I might have said in answer to her soft, "I'll not forget." "I am a gallant blockhead," I muttered. "The fool De Coislin could not have done worse. Ah! fair white scarf," said I, "I'll wear you always next my heart, and in the day of danger, you shall cross my breast. I love you better than the *cordon bleu*. I would not give you for the king's."

I looked about for my hat and found it near where the brigand lay. I stopped to look at him; the same foul rage that made his face a hell was with him still. "Monsieur," said I, "I owe you more than you will ever know, for you and I have met our fate at Athis-Mons."

And then Bazille appeared.

"Come, brave Bazille," I cried, "how fares the wound?"

The good fellow was pale but smiling.

"I pray you will not speak of such a trifle, Monsieur le Comte," said he, "but you, monsieur, is there not blood upon your shoulder?"

"Oh! like enough. I had not noticed it. There's blood in many places about here. But if

there is, there'll be no more. My arm is right. And now we'll dine, Bazille. I said I'd carve the knave and then the mutton. The knave is carved and served; we'll put the mutton on its guard. It may prove tough and put up a good fight, who knows?"

We entered the inn. "Landlord!" I cried, "landlord!" But no one came; the place seemed deserted, and then I heard a muffled, "Holy Virgin! save!" "Where is the fool?" I cried, and seeing a cupboard door not tightly shut, I whirled it back, and on the floor, under a shelf among the pots and pans, perceived mine host's big wooden shoes and stout posterior. I kicked him, and he bawled, "Have mercy! have mercy! I did not bring him here. I am an honest man and a poor one."

" 'A man is known by the company he keeps,' " said I, "but the 'Poulet d'Or' is certainly a strange Eden where knaves and fools can lie together side by side. Pull him out, Bazille."

And when I saw him sprawling on the floor, minus his wig, his face begrimed and his fat paunch palpitating, I shook with laughter.

"Monsieur," said I, "one dines with difficulty at the 'Poulet d' Or.' France is so filled with the

fine fame of your good cheer, and travelers press in so vigorously on every side, that one must struggle somewhat to be served. I wager there is not an inn in Paris half so popular."

"Where is he, monsieur?" he cried in terror, "where is he?"

"Oh, he's outside," I answered, laughing.

The landlord rolled on his back and put up his fat hands.

"Keep him out, monsieur!" he cried, "in God's name keep him out! I shall be hanged for having brigands in my house—I, Chomerac, an honest man!"

He was so ridiculous that I could not refrain from pushing the thing a little further. I bent over him and snapped my fingers under his nose.

"Oh! you'll be hanged," I cried, "make sure of that! What do you think he's done? He and his crew held up the coach of Madame de Frontenac. You heard the shots. The bird of prey came from your nest. Your 'Golden Chicken' is a 'Golden Vulture.' His Eminence the Cardinal Mazarin—oh! he has sharp, sharp ears and long, long claws"—(here he howled), "His Eminence will find you out and hang you

on a fine fat gallows, and the jolly birds will peck your fine fat paunch."

He rolled on his stomach and kicked his heels in agony. When I had laughed my fill: "Come, come," said I, "enough of this. He's outside as I said, but with a sword cut through his heart, and no more life in him than in this iron pot," and I kicked it across the room.

Chomerac sprang to his feet.

"Dead?" he cried, "Ruffo de Bonneval dead? He's a devil, monsieur. No man alive can kill him."

"Ruffo de Bonneval! Do you mean to tell me that fellow was Ruffo de Bonneval?"

"Yes, yes, monsieur. Ruffo! Ruffo himself, the king of the bohemians, the terror of ——"

"All travelers in France. Cease babbling, fool, I know about him. And so," said I, "oh, yes! I understand that bow. He learned it at the court of Louis XIII. before he killed De Perrotin, who showed him up a cheat at cards. Since then he's warred with God and man, a price upon his head. Well, by my faith! Bazille, my good right arm did better than it knew. With this experience, I think I'll carve the muton fairly well. Come, Chomerac, serve it up."

Chomerac ran in earnest now, while I seated myself, and Bazille stood ready to serve. "Bazille," said I, pointing to a chair, "be good enough to sit down." I thought the fellow would faint; he grew pale and gasped, "Monsieur le Comte!"

"Yes, yes. You've fought to-day beside me and have earned your dinner. The king when with the army dines with his captains. We're on campaign, Bazille. Sit down." And seeing that he still hesitated, I said, "I command you!" With that he sat.

Chomerac brought the mutton—oh, it was cooked! there was no denying that—it was burned through and through, and the capon, alas! was a wreck, but I faced them bravely for hunger and fastidiousness were never bed-fellows, and I asked Chomerac for a bottle of wine. He disappeared and returned with a fine one which he placed carefully on the table.

"What is this?" said I, uncorking it, "vouvray? Mon Dieu, vouvray! with its delicious odor of violets. Come, honest man, explain how such nectar as this found its way into the gizzard of that much-plucked bird, the 'Golden Chicken?'"

"It's Ruffo's," said Chomerac, winking, "Ruffo brought it and told me to serve it him."

"M. le bohème had good taste," said I, filling my glass. "I drink his health. Perhaps even now he holds up those who ride post-haste to Paradise. Well, I bear him no grudge. His last shot brought me happiness, and so—I drink his health!"

I had made but little headway with my scanty meal when I heard the noise of horses coming rapidly. "Listen!" said I, then laughing, "that is the way the musketeers of His Eminence gallop. They're after you, Chomerac." The landlord made a dive into his cupboard, but, contrary to my expectation, the riders slackened their pace at the "Poulet d'Or" and pulled up. "More gentlemen," said I, "who come to try the far-famed hospitality of that regal inn, the 'Poulet d'Or.' How sad to disappoint them!" and rising, I went to the door. Parbleu! it was the Vicomte de Noailles dismounting. There were three mounted pages in blue livery, a couple of valets, as many grooms, and led-horses with packs, for the vicomte, though the bravest fellow in the world, was a knight of the boudoir and traveled with baggage sufficient for a corps

de ballet. He was fresh, glittering, perfumed, covered with lace and ribbons, and in short looked as though he had just stepped out of Her Majesty's antechamber at the Louvre. I dare say we were a sufficient contrast, but he embraced me warmly and I him with real joy.

"Come," said he, "we must talk."

I motioned to Bazille, who dragged the trembling Chomerac out of his cupboard and from the room. Then I closed the door, and we sat down.

"You are bursting with news?" said I.

"News? I'm full of it."

"Well, first—I got your letter."

"Of course, or you would not be here."

"And you?"

"I feared you might delay and started for Lannoy."

"With all that baggage? Did you think I could offer you a fête or the opera?"

"Pish! pish! I should dine with you shouldn't I? Besides I honor you by being in my best and bravest and that you know delights me."

"I am a fool," I cried, "and you the best fellow in the world. Come to Lannoy with twenty led-horses if you like, I'll stable them all, and now I'll drink your health."

"But let me tell you——"

"Not a word till you have tasted my wine."

"What is it?"

"Smell it."

"Vouvray!"

"What do you think of that?"

"Superb! Do you mean to say you got it in this hole?"

"This hole? My dear vicomte, this is the 'Poulet d'Or,' the first inn in France. Externally the bird is plucked, but its bones bud wonders. You saw my valet, a moment ago, remove the prosperous proprietor. My friend, the patronage of this place is so preposterous that people fight for dinners."

"Ah, I know well they fight, but not for dinners."

"You've seen what lies without. But what of M. le Prince de Pajou?"

"Zounds! M. le Prince can wait, but tell me how you did it? *Sacré!* how did you ever do it?"

"What? Kill a knave? Why with my sword, of course."

"How did you save them? How did you save *her*?"

"You know?"

"Everything. I met their coach a half-league this side Choisy. The comtesse stopped me, and it was Mademoiselle who told me I should find you here. My dear Lannoy, this whole affair, if I were not your firm fast friend, would make me green with envy."

"How so? Your sword's as long as mine, and I dare say for all your lace your arm's as strong. How so?"

"To-morrow your name will be in every mouth. You'll o'ertop any prince in Paris, and if you deign to honor the Louvre with your proud presence, they'll give you an ovation; Her Majesty the Regent will walk with you to the door. It turns my head to think of it!"

"Your head is turned already," said I, laughing. "Ruffo de Bonneval was a famous brigand and a bold one, but do you fancy because I've killed him Her Majesty the Regent will walk with me to the door? Bah! absurd! My dear vicomte, consult a physician and the grand master of ceremonies; you need them both to set you right."

The vicomte sprang from his chair.

"Ruffo de Bonneval?" he cried, "Ruffo de Bonneval?"

“Yes, Ruffo. He was the knave who held them up. A good swordsman too. I fought him twice; the first time for my dinner. Alas! my friend, you come too late to share that sumptuous meal, but here is Ruffo’s wine, his *vouvray*—*ma foi!* he was a connoisseur in that, whatever else he may have been. Come, now, I’ll fill your glass. Wine will unravel all your snarls.”

The vicomte stood staring at me like a man who sees spooks.

“Ruffo!” he gasped, “Ruffo! Well, if in addition to all else, you have killed Ruffo, they’ll carry you in triumph on the *Cours la Reine*.”

“Oh! now you *are* mad,” I cried. “You are stark mad, indeed!”

He was pacing up and down.

“Are you blind?” he cried. “Don’t you see?”

“I see nothing. You and your words are all a muddle. The whole thing may be a dream from which I shall awake in the *Château de Lannoy*—but no! ah, no! there is one reality—*this!*” and I drew from my bosom the white scarf with its gleaming golden fringe.

The vicomte stopped before me.

"What's that?" he cried.

"Her scarf. She gave it to me. The scarf of Mademoiselle."

"Oh! this is beyond all! It is you who are mad. Do you know the proudest peer in France would sell his soul to get a scarf like that? Do you know there are kings in Europe who would go down on their knees to get a scarf like that? Oh! you are mad!"

"And you," I shouted, "are a raving idiot! Any man, no matter who, prince, peer, king, emperor, would be ennobled by her scarf, but it is I who wear her colors, I who bear her bright image in my heart, and though she may not equal in her rank some of your painted flowers at the Louvre, I love her, and you—mon Dieu! I never thought to see it!—you mock me!"

The vicomte stopped short.

"I mock you? Heaven forbid! but answer me this question, answer quickly, do you know whom you saved?"

"What a question! You are certainly drunk or mad. You cannot be drunk; you must be mad."

"Answer my question!"

"Oh well, to humor you, but what stupidity!

Madame la Comtesse de Frontenac and Mademoiselle."

"Mademoiselle who?" he cried, in such a tone that a cold chill went through me.

"Mademoiselle who?" said I, "why, Mademoiselle—Mademoiselle de Frontenac, of course."

The room rang with laughter, and the vicomte, falling into a chair, held his sides and roared, "Ha! ha! ha! Oh, mon Dieu! this is too much. This is beyond all. Mademoiselle de Frontenac! Oh! Lannoy! Lannoy! Lannoy! Another joke like this and I shall be a dead man."

I sprang to my feet and seized him by the shoulder.

"You'll be a dead one soon," I cried, "if you make game of her!" Then striking my head: "My God! Novion, what am I saying? I half believe you're right, my friend, that I am mad. As you love me solve this riddle. Was it not Mademoiselle de Frontenac?"

"The Comtesse de Frontenac has no daughter," said he, "besides, did you not see how young she is? How could you fancy that she had a daughter as old as Mademoiselle?"

"I saw nothing but her," I cried, madly. "In Heaven's name, who is she?"

“Mademoiselle, I tell you. Mademoiselle.”

“Oh! Novion,” I cried, “have pity! Mademoiselle who?”

“Mademoiselle who?” he cried, “Mademoiselle who? Mademoiselle d’Eu, Mademoiselle de Dombes, Mademoiselle de Saint-Fargeau, Mademoiselle de la Roche-sur-Yon, Mademoiselle d’Orléans, Mademoiselle de Montpensier, Mademoiselle the daughter of Monsieur, Mademoiselle the heiress to forty millions, Mademoiselle who has refused three kings and an emperor, Mademoiselle the granddaughter of Henri IV., Mademoiselle the cousin-german of the king—la Grande Mademoiselle!”

Hope, my bright star hope, had vanished. I sank into a chair completely crushed.

CHAPTER IX

A COURT CARD

It was evening when we reached Paris. I had said little on the way, but suffered much. The bright flame of my love, which had sprung up at her touch and been fed by her glance, burned still beneath the ashes of doubt and dread. But oh, the hopelessness of it now! the futility of it now! Before the blinding blaze of her regality, what was it? A tiny taper—and yet it consumed me! And who was I? Again I heard the words: “I leave thee, mon petit, a splendid name, a proud name.” Ah, true! I was the Comte de Lannoy—a splendid name, a proud name, but because of this was it for me to rise on the wings of my wishes to be hurled headlong like Icarus? Was it for me to seek to scale the steps of a throne strewn with rejected kings and emperors? No! no! But oh! that face and form, that splendid courage and that princely pride, that head which Nature fitted for a crown, that voice which made a sovereign a slave. And

how she walked and stood, and, in the bright sun that lit her, smiled and said to one, "You I make *écuyer*," and to the other, "You shall be *écuyer cavalcadour*. My hand!"

With these thoughts waging hot warfare in my head, I rode by the vicomte's side, he laughing and chatting, I answering in monosyllables, and thus we entered Paris as the setting sun touched with his last lingering kiss the towers of Notre Dame. We rode through the narrow, mud-stained streets, the mendicants and the vendors of fruit and pastry backing against the houses to make way for us; across some they had already hung the chains for the night, in others the stalls were still doing business. We passed the Luxembourg—*her* palace—which across its stately gardens looked at us loftily. We quickened our pace, carrying confusion among the sedan-chair bearers of the Rue Dauphine; we galloped over the Pont Neuf where booths and book-stalls ply their trade above the Seine, and having on the Rue du Louvre blocked with our train the coach of a seigneur driving in haste to supper in the Faubourg Saint Germain, we met the cudgels of his valets with our own, and coming off victorious, cantered at last into the court-

yard of the Hôtel de Noailles in the Rue des Bons Enfants hard by the Palais Royal.

We supped alone, the vicomte and I, solemnly at first, with no more wit than walks in Père Lachaise. The vicomte raised his glass.

"Monsieur," said he, "I drink to one I would were with me, my dearest, best, but now alas! my absent friend,—Lannoy."

"Ma foi!" I cried, draining my glass, "thou art the host par excellence and my dear friend, and I? Why, I am but a wooden guest. Since Love can make a mummy of a man at times, I'll none of him. I banish her!" and then I felt to see if the white scarf was safe and sure beside my heart.

"My dear Lannoy has come again," he cried. "I lost thee at the inn of Athis-Mons. Thy wound was in thy shoulder, not thy heart. Who is the first physician in Paris, think you? Fools say Falcoz. No! it is I, Novion de Noailles, who bring a dead man back to life with a single glass of wine. Ha! ha! my fame will spread. Let's see, for consultation I shall ask three livres, for bleeding, fifteen sous."

"Most modest charges," said I, laughing, "a consultation with M. le Médecin de Noailles,

three livres; a bleeding, fifteen sous,—oh, glorious! Some duchesses, I fancy, would want bleeding daily. The Duchesse de Vivonne for instance, eh?”

“Ha! ha! Bleeding would be one of my strong points. I’d try my hand on old Morvilliers. He has been bled for rheumatism sixty-four times in eight months and lives to tell it. He’d make a splendid patient; no fear of killing him. Imagine me upon a mule making my visits!”

“Grand! grand!” I cried, “who is without? M. de Noailles, the first physician in Paris. Bid him enter. ‘Bon jour, Monsieur le Médecin.’ ‘Bon jour, Madame la Comtesse.’ ‘Alas! monsieur, my poodle Pons refuses everything. We fill his platter every hour with *poulet, brochet, potage aux herbes*, in vain! in vain! he will touch nothing. Mon Dieu! what shall I do?’ ‘Starve him a while, madame.’ ‘Oh, thanks, oh, thanks, a thousand, thousand thanks! Your charge?’ ‘One hundred louis.’”

“Splendid! splendid!” roared the vicomte, “I should like to do it. Her Majesty the Regent: ‘Where is the Vicomte de Noailles? We see him seldom now.’ Madame la Duchesse de

Vivonne: 'Your Majesty must mean M. le Médecin de Noailles. Oh! he's quite busy, I assure you. Madame de Saint-Peray has just been brought to bed. He acts as fairy god-mother.'"

I filled my glass and rose laughing. "To M. le Médecin de Noailles," I cried, "greatest of doctors, best of friends!" and again we drank together. We should probably have continued longer in the same strain had not one of the vicomte's valets entered and announced, "M. le Duc de Druillon d'Ormesson."

"The very man we want," cried the vicomte. "He's a court almanac. Listen to him and you learn everything. Tell him anything, and you put it into the *Gazette de France*. Ah! Monsieur le Duc, well met!"

Monsieur le Duc, I saw, was thin, very thin, with an enormous nose, a most inquisitive nose, a nose that must go everywhere and see everything. The nose was necessary to M. le Duc, and he was necessary to the nose; his business being to follow it, look after it, and tell what it found. These reflections, however, upon the subtle relations between M. le Duc and his nose are the result of some personal observation, and

not, as might possibly be supposed, the record of a single glance.

The vicomte presented me, and M. le Duc bowed with an air which said, "Why are you here? I am bursting to know."

"M. le Duc," said the vicomte, "it was a fair wind that brought you to me for here I am, a floundering bark, with my court moorings cut by a day's absence from Paris and quite at sea as to my reckoning, but you, monsieur, know all the rocks and reefs, in fact the what and which of everything. Come, then, how stands it now at court? What's new?"

M. le Duc was like a fish which, wriggling from the uncertain grasp of one who holds it, falls with a sparkling, splashing thud and finds again its element.

"A thousand things!" he cried, "but first, de Ruillé and de Rozière have met."

"No!" cried the vicomte.

"Yes, at last. They've sought the chance for weeks; it came to-day. De Ruillé was at the Comtesse de Sassenay's and reeling off a list of names of places in the forest of Fontainebleau. 'Monsieur,' said the comtesse, 'your memory is prodigious.' 'A good memory,' cried de Ro-

zière, 'implies small judgment.' 'Ha!' cried de Ruillé, 'an insult! I challenge you.' In short they fought it out in the Bois, five on a side. De Rozière has lost an eye; de Ruillé is the hero of the hour."

"Well, that *is* news, and how does the Comtesse de Sassenay bear up? You know she had a weakness for de Rozière."

"She? Oh, she is eating lemons now to make her pale. Then, too, Bassompierre has won a hundred thousand francs at tric-trac. His new court-dress had cost him fifteen thousand francs, and he had but a hundred crowns to pay for it, until he had this streak of luck, but now, on Wednesday week, he gives a ball which is to cost him twenty thousand livres. Madame la Duchesse de Vivonne cries out that one sees nothing now at court but does; the bucks are all at cards."

"That's like Madame la Duchesse," laughed the vicomte, "but all the same, she'll flirt well at Bassompierre's fête, I fancy."

"But that's not all," said M. le Duc, "Madame la Duchesse de Vivonne has done much worse. She has declared that no woman can be considered à la mode who wears a pair of gloves for

longer than three hours. She frames the fashions, and we poor men, mon Dieu! how can we keep our wives in pace with her caprice without recourse to cards. And then the vixen cries, 'The bucks are all at cards!'"

"Madame la Duchesse de Vivonne," said I, "is certainly a shrew."

"Quite true, monsieur," said M. le Duc, "but I must tell you a most diverting adventure of the Maréchal de Crequi. The Duc de Coislin came to call. You know, Monsieur le Vicomte, the maréchal's unendurable politeness. Well, when de Coislin would depart, M. le Maréchal must needs escort him to the door. The Duc protests; the maréchal opens up his battery of bows and fusillades him with civilities. The Duc in desperation rushes out and slams and locks the door. The maréchal, not to be outdone, leaps through the window to the court, and meets him at his coach. The Duc believes the devil must have brought him there, and in a blare of bows, of compliments, of condescension and civility, drives off in haste. The joke is that the maréchal by his leap had put his thumb quite out of joint. He summons Monsieur Falcoz, who has the thumb soon put to rights and proudly cries,

‘a perfect cure!’ But just as he departs, M. le Maréchal must needs open the door for him also. Falcoz with many bobs and bows protests, the maréchal sweats salutes and salutations, and while they both, their hands upon the handle, are pressing precedence upon each other—presto! the maréchal’s thumb is out of joint again, and Falcoz has to turn and fix it straightway.”

The vicomte and I laughed heartily.

“But I have quite forgotten Madame de Sainte-Triaize de Poitiers,” continued M. le Duc. “She, as you know, is over ears in debt, but all’s right now. She has wheedled His Eminence into giving her the monopoly of sedan-chairs, while M. le Prince de Pajou ——”

“Ah!” cried the vicomte in some excitement, “what of Monsieur le Prince?”

“Monsieur le Prince de Pajou gets the governorship of Blaye.”

“That is a plum indeed! Has he plucked it?”

“Not yet, but he will to-morrow. It is to be announced at twelve, after the council.”

“He told you, I suppose.”

“Oh! yes. He has bought for the occasion a new cloak covered with gold lace, which costs him eight hundred francs.”

The vicomte glanced at me quickly.

"M. le Duc," said he, "you are *le roi des raconteurs*. The floundering bark is fast again with her court moorings firm. Paris is great, monsieur, oh! great is Paris, and the events in Paris, but greater still is Athis-Mons."

"What! Athis-Mons?" cried M. le Duc. "How so?"

"When once the deeds this day has seen in Athis-Mons are trumpeted, your de Ruillé, hero of the hour, becomes a pasteboard knight, your maréchal an unmentioned clown, and all your news as nothing."

"What! what!" cried M. le Duc, for his nose sniffed a scent, "speak quickly, I implore you."

The vicomte waved his hand.

"I will relate to you," said he, "an adventure the most singular, the most surprising, the most incredible, the most unforeseen, the most immense, the most triumphant!"

M. le Duc was now all nose.

"Yes," continued the vicomte, "you shall hear. To-day M. le Comte de Lannoy sets out to visit me. He stops for dinner at an inn in Athis-Mons, the 'Poulet d'Or.' Has your good fortune, M. le Duc, ever brought you to that hos-

pitiable hostelry? No? You should try it; it is a remarkable bird. To continue. M. le Comte finds that the good cheer at the 'Poulet d'Or' by no means equals his appetite. In short, the larder contains only a leg of mutton and a capon, already roasting for another gentleman, previously come. M. le Comte demands an introduction to this gentleman and proposes an equal division of the dinner. His courteous proposition is refused with scorn. M. le Comte declares that he will help himself. The other defiantly dares him to do so. A few warm words follow, and swords are drawn."

"Ho! ho!" cried M. le Duc, "swords! bravo!"

"Swords are drawn," continued the vicomte, "and they fall to, M. le Comte proposing to carve the gentleman, and then the mutton after. In the midst of a delightful pierce and parry, shots are heard."

"Ho! ho!" cried M. le Duc, his nose twitching, "shots!"

"The gentleman dashes from the room and from the inn, pursued by M. le Comte. Upon the road is seen—what, do you fancy? A coach and six at full speed, followed by mounted brigands, and it soon appears that the gentleman,

fresh come from crossing swords with M. le Comte, is no other than their chief. He kills a galloping leader with a pistol shot, and the coach stops. Ladies are in the coach."

"Ho! ho!" cried M. le Duc, "ladies!"

"The outriders and M. le Comte's valet engage the brigands, while M. le Comte challenges their chief. Ah! that was a battle royal, M. le Duc. What skill, what strength of arm were needed to venge and vanquish in that fight! For would you know with whom he bared his blade? A word will tell you all—it was that roaring robber, that invincible bohemian, Ruffo de Bonneval!"

M. le Duc sprang to his feet, his nose trembling with excitement.

"Incredible! monsieur," he cried. "Why! when M. de Desmoustiers de Merinville, a year ago, encountered this Ruffo——"

"Listen!" cried the vicomte. "They fought, I tell you, frantically, furiously, but now attention! the ladies——"

"Ah! yes. The ladies!"

"The ladies had left the coach and stood breathless, their eyes upon them——"

"And well they might," cried M. le Duc. "Ruffo de Bonneval! Mon Dieu!"

“And while the ladies stood thus,” continued the vicomte, “Ruffo, by a cunning twist, spun the comte’s sword from his hand.”

“Heavens!” cried M. le Duc, glancing at me. “However he lives. Continue! continue!”

“The sword fell at the feet of one of the ladies, and before Ruffo could reach the comte, the fairest and the bravest—yes, the bravest—hand in France had seized that sword and placed it again in the comte’s hand.”

“Oh, monsieur! astounding!” cried M. le Duc. “It is a chapter from *Le Roman des Romans* that you are giving me.”

“It is the truth I am telling you,” cried the vicomte. “Did I not warn you it was an adventure the most surprising, the most incredible, the most immense? The half has not been told.”

“Continue! continue!” cried M. le Duc, his nose twitching in ecstasy.

“M. le Comte fights now with the conquering courage of a thousand men. In short, he drives Ruffo to his knees and plants his sword safe in the ruffian’s heart. Then the mighty Mars turns, and as the princely Paris greeted Venus, so he greets the ladies. The rest was in a whirl of gallant compliments, of strong lips touching like a

sigh the whitest hands, of bright eyes flashing darts much surer than Diana's, and, as they drove away, the one who gave him back his sword flung him a scarf to be his future plume and oriflamme," (my heart was beating very fast now) "and whispered that she never would forget."

"Magnificent! and now—the ladies' names!"

The vicomte laughed.

"Ah! there, monsieur, you prick the point and pith of all. The ladies' names! Suppose now I should tell you Mesdames de Picquet and de Verteillac?"

"I would not believe you unless you had first mentioned screams, faintings and hysterics, and as for picking up a sword—ha! ha!"

"You know them well. What do you say now to Madame d'Artis de Marcillac and Mlle. Lesergent d'Isbergue?"

"They might have stood unmoved, their hearts are hard enough, but swords and scarfs—impossible!"

"Well, then, Madame de Sainte-Triaize de Poitiers and ——"

"But she I've told you was in Paris."

"Quite true, I had forgotten. I'll banter you no longer, but brace yourself, monsieur, brace

yourself. What do you say to Madame de Frontenac ——”

“Ah! there’s a power at court. M. le Comte, I envy you; you will go far with that,” and M. le Duc made me a fine bow.

“And her dear friend,” cried the vicomte, “Mademoiselle ——”

“Her dear friend and Mademoiselle?” cried M. le Duc. “Her dearest friend is—surely you don’t mean?—oh! what stupendous! ——”

“Exactly that, monsieur. Stupendous! enormous! for she who gave Monsieur le Comte his sword, and she who bade him bear her glorious scarf, was Mademoiselle, the only one in France worthy the name, was Mademoiselle in whose blue veins bounds the bright blood of Henri IV., was Mademoiselle whom we have nobly named, La Grande,—was Mademoiselle de Montpensier!”

M. le Duc had controlled himself with difficulty for some moments; now he was on fire. His nose grew, his thin body swelled, his windpipe was distended; it seemed certain that unless he could soon ease himself by pouring forth his astounding acquisitions, he would certainly explode; his capacity was large, but the vicomte’s last announcement had filled him to the tonsils.

He could only gasp and throw up his hands. He essayed to speak, but speech was impossible; he was a man puffed with wonder and paralyzed. The vicomte shook with laughter. Finally M. le Duc sputtered something about an appointment in the Faubourg Saint Germain, and started toward the door.

"Superb!" whispered the vicomte to me. "He'll blow this everywhere, no fear. Tomorrow's sun will see who gets the governorship of Blaye."

I sprang from my chair as though struck by a dagger, and before M. le Duc could reach the door, I faced him, and barring his passage with my arms, I cried, "Monsieur le Duc, you shall not stir to-night outside the Hôtel de Noailles!"

CHAPTER X

THE QUEEN OF TRUMPS

IF I had leveled a pistol at the head of M. le Duc, he and the vicomte would not have been more surprised. "Monsieur!" gasped M. le Duc. "Lannoy!" cried the vicomte, "in heaven's name, what new jest is this?"

"It is no jest," said I sternly. "I am in earnest, deadly earnest. My dear Noailles, you are a staunch, true friend; you mean the best, but to win the governorship of Blaye as you propose?—never!"

"Ho! ho!" cried M. le Duc. "The governorship of Blaye!"

"Lannoy!" cried the vicomte, "you have lost your reason!"

"But not my honor. What! I have rescued a woman. My sword would have shaken off its sheath as quickly for a bourgeoisie dame. My heart was high with hope when I believed her Mademoiselle de Frontenac, and now when my enormous error fronts me, and faded hope has

fled, my heart is hers. She bore it with her on her way to Choisy and left me this, her snow-white scarf," (and drawing it from my breast, I held it up). "Behold my stainless crest! And do you think I'll smirch this fair white scarf with avarice and ambition? Do you think I'll make of it a ladder to climb to place and power? No! no! a thousand times, no! no! My friend, I'll go to-morrow with you to the Louvre—no fear! I'll go to-morrow with you to the Louvre—and if I gain the governorship of Blaye, it shall not be because I chance to have killed Ruffo, the king of the bohemians, it shall not be because I happen to have rescued la Grande Mademoiselle, but it *shall* be because I am Charles-Alexandre, Comte de Lannoy!"

The vicomte sprang forward and embraced me.

"My dearest friend!" he cried. "Oh! this is glorious. Aye! it is Bayard come again, *sans peur et sans reproche!*"

"Monsieur!" gasped M. le Duc, "you too mean to detain me?"

"By my life I do," cried the vicomte. "You are the only man in Paris that knows this news, and you have yourself named the limit of your

imprisonment. You shall not stir, monsieur, until after twelve to-morrow for then *Monsieur le Comte de Lannoy* or *Monsieur le Prince de Pajou* will have gained the governorship of Blaye."

M. le Duc danced in agony. To have all this startling, world-awakening news inside of him and to be unable to spit out a single syllable was, in his case, the refinement of cruelty. He looked like a man on the verge of an apoplectic fit.

"*Mon Dieu!*" he groaned, "the only man in Paris! Oh! imagine the sensation in the *Fau-bourg Saint Germain*. Oh! imagine the regent's antechamber, the whole court capering with curiosity and I the cynosure of every eye—and then to be mewed up! It is horrible! I shall expire!" And M. le Duc in his agitation made a dash to gain the door. I whirled him back.

"Not so fast," said I. "I much regret, monsieur, that the *Hôtel de Noailles* can offer you no better cheer than thumb-screws and the wrack, but you have left us no alternative. But calm yourself, monsieur, calm yourself; you shall have your triumph yet, which will taste all the sweeter for your waiting. At one to-morrow, you shall tell your tale with all the laced embellishments your brain has given it over night.

You shall behold peers agape with wonder; you shall see duchesses pressing about you, the quid-nunc illustrious and lionized. Be calm then till to-morrow."

One might as well, however, have filled a man with gunpowder, attached him to a lighted fuse, and bid him then be calm. M. le Duc was suffocating; he was pregnant with paralyzing information and could not give it birth. He squealed with disappointment. "Come," said the vicomte, "we must shut him up." Therefore he and I took M. le Duc by either arm and forced him along to a safe apartment into which we pushed him politely and locked the door.

"The key, my dear Noailles," said I, "belongs to you."

"It shall not leave me," he answered, "until you bid it do so. For once in his life, M. le Duc must go to bed and rise without a valet to assist him. I wonder if he can?" And then he roared with laughter. We heard a crash, and the voice of M. le Duc bawling, "Let me out!" "Ah!" said the vicomte, "farewell, sweet porcelain! He vents his wrath on you." Then bowing to the locked door, he called loudly, "Good-night, M. le Duc."

“Good-night, M. le Duc,” said I. “Remember that a triumph dearly bought is twice as sweet as one that lacks much labor.”

At ten in the morning, we were ready for the Louvre. The vicomte had taken the greatest pains about my toilet, suggesting a touch here and a touch there, and when I stood at last in a suit of emerald green, slashed with white satin, sown with pearls and laced with silver with a cloak of the same lined with silver satin, yellow boots with silver spurs, yellow gauntlets brave with silver embroidery, a shoulder-knot of diamonds and a blaze of emeralds about the light lace at my throat, ribbons and perfumes everywhere, I dare say I was a gallant sight.

“My dear Noailles,” said I. “I certainly have too many pearls and too much lace.”

The vicomte laughed.

“My friend,” said he, “you are not going to the king. You are going to the regent, and the regent is a woman. I wager five hundred louis she has not seen a handsomer cavalier since His English Majesty’s ambassador came to ask the hand of Henriette. We’ll make Her Majesty renew her youth and think she sees again a Buckingham.”

"And how is M. le Duc this morning?" said I, when we were in the coach.

"Perfectly furious," said the vicomte. "I breakfasted with him for I was afraid to leave him alone with any valets. He would certainly talk. Ha! ha! I have incurred his lasting enmity, make sure of that."

The distance from the Rue des Bons Enfants to the Louvre is short, and we soon arrived at the Pavillon Sully where the king's gray musketeers were on duty. We passed through the vestibule, up the staircase at the top of which were more musketeers, then through several halls and finally entered the regent's antechamber. Save for the guards, the halls had been quite deserted; the antechamber, however, was full of people. The vicomte saluted several as we passed. "There is de Ruillé," he whispered, and I saw a cavalier, brilliant and beaming, surrounded by a half-dozen women who were evidently oblivious to everything but him. He was fanning one of them who was very handsome, very light and had a profusion of saucy curls.

"Ah," said I, softly, "the hero of the hour. Is that Madame de Sassenay?"

"Exactly."

I glanced at her again.

"Yes," said I, "she's worth fighting for."

"But not worth having when you know her temper. Look at the Duchesse de Vivonne. There's a duchesse for you!"

She was sitting upon a tabouret and posed with delicious languor, while the dark curtain that hung beside a window formed a background that gave her throat and arms the whiteness of an antique statue. Her eyes rested for a moment upon the men who stood saluting her, and then wandered about, seeking others who might come to sing her praise. But whether it remained fixed or wandered, her glance never ceased to say, "Look at me! look at me! I am quite superb."

Then I saw M. le Prince de Pajou with his great wig, his sharp nose and his black eyes turning as usual now here now there, advancing on his high heels, arm in arm with the Cardinal de Lemoine whose gaunt figure towered above him. M. le Prince was strutting like a peacock, with the new gold-laced cloak hanging from his shoulders. I worked my way through the crowd and met him.

"Bon jour, Monsieur le Prince," said I, bowing, "I am charmed to see you looking so well."

The prince stopped for an instant, coolly surveyed me from head to foot, and then turning to the Cardinal de Lemoine, continued, "As I was about to say, M. le Cardinal, the matter is—" and they passed on, conversing in low tones. I threw up my head, my hand gripped the hilt of my sword convulsively, and then I felt the golden fringe of the fair white scarf which crossed my breast and was looped in a knot at my side. I drew a long breath, shook myself a little, and went to join the vicomte. He was at the other end of the gallery, talking with the first gentleman of the chamber, and as I reached them, the latter opened the door of the regent's cabinet and disappeared. There was a general turning of eyes at the opening of the door, but as no one came out, the conversation went on again.

"I have requested an audience," said the vicomte.

"Will you get it, think you?"

"No fear," said he, laughing. "Her Majesty has never refused me that. It is too late to begin now."

We heard a slight scratching on the inner panel of the door. The vicomte in his turn scratched lightly on the outer panel. The door opened; the

time had come. I heard the words, "Monsieur le Vicomte de Noailles, Monsieur le Comte de Lannoy." We were in the presence of the regent.

We bowed at the threshold, advanced some paces and bowed again, and finally, approaching Her Majesty, bowed for the third time.

Anne of Austria had been a beauty in her youth, but at the time I first saw her, she had grown corpulent, though her face still retained much of that fair contour and coloring that more than twenty years before His Grace of Buckingham had loved so well. But the freshness, time had taken from her, was well replaced by a dignity suited to her rank. The present king gets from his mother his grace and his grand air which he wears as no other can. Time and again I have seen him in the gallery at Versailles or in the gardens of Marly with the same proud expression on his face, the same bright light in his eyes, that I saw his mother wear the morning that I met her at the Louvre. The regent was seated in her cabinet, that vast apartment which she loved and had embellished with so many works of art. Carraccio's *Æneas*, Guido's *Flight into Egypt*, Raphael's *St. John*, and gems from the

brushes of Da Vinci and Del Sarto looked down upon her from their gilded frames, while behind her hung the *Pilgrims of Emmaüs* by Veronese. One hand lay on the crimson velvet of the table beside her, and I saw about her neck a collar of pearls of a single strand, the smallest larger than a filbert, and perfectly matched. I remember them well because Her Majesty bequeathed them to the Dauphines of France, and I have seen them since upon the bosom of Madame la Duchesse de Bourgogne. As for the rest, if you would have the details of a woman's dress, you must get them from the Duc de Montboissier-Beaufort-Canillac, who can give you the minutest points years after. I fix my eyes upon the woman's face. If that is lovely, I expect the robe to match. Her Majesty the Regent was arrayed as became her rank.

"Your Majesty," said the vicomte, raising his head after the third bow, "here is Monsieur le Comte de Lannoy."

The regent saluted me with a gracious inclination of the head and bent slightly forward.

"Monsieur le Comte," said she, "you come to court in brave array. How is it that I do not see you in mourning for your father?"

"Your Majesty has forgotten that it is not the custom of my house. The Lannoys since the days of Philip the Fair have never done so, and after all, Your Majesty, it is much better to cherish a father's memory in one's heart than on one's sleeve."

"You would have difficulty in convincing some people of that, monsieur; for instance, His Eminence."

"His Eminence, Your Majesty," said I, "despises narrow minds. He could not well do otherwise when Her Majesty the Regent sets him the example."

"A fair answer, M. le Comte. If all my courtiers spoke as well, I should believe myself among the gallants of my youth."

"Your youth, Your Majesty, has ever been your most devoted gallant and is with you still."

The regent inclined her head toward me with a charming smile, and I bowed before her in response.

"Your father, monsieur, was a great nobleman. Did he die as fitted him?"

"In the arms of the Church, Your Majesty, with his last thoughts for France."

"That is as it should be," said the regent.

Then with sudden emotion: "I hear too much of Orleans, of Dauphiné, of Normandie, of Touraine, of Bourgogne. It should be France and France alone, always and ever—France!"

It was the woman battling to hand to her son his crown with every *fleur-de-lis* intact. We were face to face with the mother of the king. The vicomte and I bowed our heads.

Again the regent spoke.

"M. le Comte de Lannoy," said she smiling, "to what do I owe this audience?"

Upon the word I took a bold resolve and answered, "To my desire to thank Your Majesty for the governorship of Blaye."

The vicomte looked at me in amazement; the regent changed countenance.

"I am not aware, M. le Comte," said she somewhat coldly, "that I have given you grounds for thanks."

"Your Majesty will remember that some days since you refused the appointment to M. le Prince de Pajou. I am, of course, ignorant of whom Your Majesty may have been pleased to appoint since, but on behalf of Monsieur the Governorship of Blaye I come to thank you that you have not appointed M. le Prince de Pajou."

“Does your friend, Monsieur the Governorship of Blaye, take an interest in this matter?” said the regent, smiling.

“He does, Your Majesty. Monsieur the Governorship will be one hundred and thirty years old next Whitsuntide for the decree which gave him birth was signed by His Majesty François I. on that day, and at his advanced age, Monsieur the Governorship hardly feels able to cope with the hallucinations of Monsieur le Prince de Pajou.”

“Ma foi!” said Her Majesty, laughing, “there is wit as well. Does Monsieur the Governorship suggest a candidate?”

“Your Majesty, Monsieur the Governorship is but the loyal subject of the regent.”

“Then, sir, I beg that you will convey my respects to Monsieur the Governorship of Blaye and tell him in my name that his next occupant will be Monsieur le Comte de Lannoy.”

“The Comte de Lannoy, madame, has strong shoulders, but they bend in bearing to Your Majesty the thanks of Monsieur the Governorship and of himself.”

And saluting the regent, I lowered the hand that held my hat until my white plumes kissed the floor.

"M. de Noailles," said the regent, with a merry glance, "unless we are much mistaken, M. the Governorship of Blaye is a fortunate personage. He will be envied by some duchesses, we think, for all his hundred and thirty years, is it not so?"

"He will be, Your Majesty," answered the vicomte, "and the fact that he will be is but another proof of the regent's perfect taste."

"We grant you that, monsieur, and if the regent's taste were never less at fault, we fancy France would gain by it."

And then the first gentleman of the chamber, entering, announced, "His Eminence the Cardinal Mazarin."

I glanced toward the door and saw His Eminence for the first time. His crafty Italian countenance was composed and dignified, while the short curling locks that quite concealed his ears, his small mustache and closely cut goatee bore lightly here and there the silvered touch of time, but the lines upon his face and forehead were the plainer mile-posts that marked a rapid youth and sleepless plots and plans. His red cap clutched the top of his head tightly, the plain white collar about his throat was starched with piety, and

thus he came majestically, his red robes rustling power.

He saluted the regent in a stately fashion, but his cold gray eyes caught us up also and swept us in from crown to heel.

"Your Majesty," said he, "the council waits your presence."

"We will attend, monseigneur, but business of the state is ever with us. Your Eminence may see as an example M. le Comte de Lannoy whom we have just named governor of Blaye."

The cardinal darted a quick glance at me—a glance one would not care to find confronting him in the dark. The vicomte and I saluted His Eminence, and he in his turn bowed to each of us to the exact limit that our rank required, with the frigidity of a marble statue.

"I understood Your Majesty to say—" he began.

"And we have changed our mind, Your Eminence. Out of consideration for Monsieur the Governorship of Blaye—his one hundred and thirty years, Monseigneur le Cardinal."

His Eminence looked mystified, and there was a merry twinkle in the regent's dark eyes.

"Your Majesty, as in all else, excels in riddles," said he, bowing.

"Which we propound and answer for the good of France."

"The council sticks at one even now, Your Majesty."

"Then we'll attend and seek to solve it for the state;" she rose and glancing at the vicomte and at me, she added, "and let us hope, gentlemen, that the regent's solutions may ever show the regent's perfect taste."

Then saluting us, she gave her hand to His Eminence, and they passed out by another door. The moment we were alone, the vicomte embraced me three times effusively.

"Thou art a prodigy!" he cried.

"And thou," I laughed, "a flatterer. But come, dear partner, thy hand holds one card yet, the knave of trumps, and since he must be played, why, play him now."

"Pardieu!" cried the vicomte, "I had quite forgotten him."

"And yet," said I, laughing, "he was once thy *deus ex machina*."

"By my life! he was, but who would have thought ——"

"My dear Noailles," said I, "he needs no knave to take the trick who trumps it with the queen."

CHAPTER XI

THE KNAVE OF TRUMPS

AGAIN the door of the regent's cabinet opened, and we passed out. The vicomte paused and whispered a word to the Duc de Coislin—it was enough. Before we came through the press to the centre of the antechamber, the eyes of all were on us, so true it is that news flies fast at court. *Ma foi!* Hermes himself could not out-strip rumor in the gallery at Versailles. That would be a pretty race. I have thought of it sometimes when I waited for the king to go to mass.

And thus we advanced, those whom I did not know making way for me, and those whom I did impeding me with congratulations—and of the two I must say that, at the moment, I preferred the former—when suddenly and without design, I found myself fronting M. le Prince de Pajou. Oh, he had heard! there was no mistaking that. Pale as ever, perched on his high heels and trembling with rage, he stood directly in my path and looked up at me with an expres-

sion so furious, and in contrast to his short figure and great wig so amusing, that in spite of the fact that I smarted still from his insult, I laughed in his face. If he had had a little wine in him, it would have been all up with him then; he nearly lost himself as it was. He raised his fist—I thought for an instant that he was going to strike me, and if he had, neither I nor any man, dead or alive, can tell what would have happened—but the fist stopped, and the diamonds flashed before my eyes.

“You—you—you—you trick me, do you?” sputtered the prince as well as he could, for to a man in his condition, speech is difficult.

“M. le Prince de Pajou,” said I, stiffly, “I congratulate you upon the recovery of your eyesight. When last I saw you, you were blind.”

Then brushing him aside, I followed the vicomte to the coach.

We returned at full speed to the Rue des Bons Enfants, and as we entered the Hôtel de Noailles, the vicomte ordered a lackey to detain the coach.

A moment after, we were at the door of M. le Duc.

“Listen!” said I. We heard the voice of M. le Duc.

“Ah! Madame la Comtesse,” he cried, “the half has not been told. It is, as I warned you, an adventure the most singular, the most surprising, the most immense, the most triumphant! I have told you it was a coach and six; now there was in the coach—guess who? I will give you five, I will give you ten, I will give you one hundred guesses. Madame la Comtesse says, ‘It is by no means difficult. It was Madame de Longueville.’ Not at all, madame. Madame la Duchesse says, ‘It was then Madame de Coulanges.’ Not at all. You are a mere bourgeoisie. In truth you are very dull. M. le Prince says, ‘It was Mademoiselle de Crequi.’ Still less. You all cry, ‘It was assuredly Mademoiselle de Chate-nay-Lomont.’ You are wrong again. Do you ‘throw your tongues to the dogs?’ Well, then here it is, by my word, my solemn word——”

“What the devil is this mummary?” cried the vicomte, opening the door. The sight that met our eyes shook us from head to heel with laughter. M. le Duc stood alone in the centre of the apartment, making the most beautiful bows, first to the canopied bed, then to the fauteuil beside the chimney, and then to the gilded clock above the mantel, which personified respectively

Madame la Duchesse, Madame la Comtesse, and M. le Prince, for M. le Duc, having I dare say suffered untold tortures, had been utterly unable to remain corked until the appointed hour. He was rehearsing his part. It was the *Tatler Triumphant*, a comedy the most sparkling and worthy the pen of Molière, and we, by chance, were present at the dress rehearsal.

"It was," cried M. le Duc, his back toward us, his shoulders erect and his right arm performing magnificent evolutions, "it was, by my faith! Mademoiselle, la Grande Mademoiselle, the ——"

Our roars of laughter cut short what I doubt not would have been a flight of eloquence unmatched in France.

"M. le Duc," I cried, "you have missed your calling. Let Paris see you once upon the boards at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, and Paris is at your feet."

M. le Duc de Druillon d'Ormesson was flushed with exertion, but his inquisitive nose was as acquisitive as ever.

"I'll not be made game of!" he cried, hotly. "I have suffered enough. The hospitality of the Hôtel de Noailles indeed! Bah! It is the Inquisition. You are Jesuits, both of you."

"Come, come, M. le Duc," said I, "cheer up. This is your hour of triumph, monsieur; the hour of the flowers and the vivats. You know your part to perfection, the audience is waiting, a word from you, and the curtain is up."

"Bah! you banter me. You have told all."

"By my life! not a word, not a syllable."

"And I am still the only man in Paris?"

"You are!" cried the vicomte, "and there's a full court to-day. Madame de Vivonne, Madame de Sassenay, Madame de Longueville, Madame—oh! they are all there. You'll blaze your way to the regent amid a cannonade of interjections and a crash of questions, gathering your laurels at every step."

"Mon Dieu!" cried M. le Duc, "the thought sets me on fire!"

"The reality," said I, "will sizzle you. But don't delay, my dear Duc, some unknown tongue may shoot a spark and burn your bays to ashes."

"Horrible!" cried M. le Duc, "and in the moment of victory! I must lose no time."

"My coach is at the door," cried the vicomte, "but stay an instant—I have news for you."

"Which is? Speak quickly!"

"Upon one condition—your word that you will return and dine with me, that the hospitality of the Hôtel de Noailles may not bear long its present blush, and that we may learn the reaping of your laurels from no lips but your own."

M. le Duc's nose was still acquisitive.

"I agree," said he.

"Then, monsieur, I have the honor to inform you that M. le Comte de Lannoy has the governorship of Blaye."

"Incredible! and M. le Prince?"

"M. le Prince has still his cloak," said I, laughing, "it cost him, I believe, eight hundred francs."

"Wonderful! wonderful! and shall I learn all at dinner?"

"You shall," cried the vicomte, "I promise you."

"Adieu! adieu!" cried M. le Duc, his foot upon the stairs, "I have dreamed of a day like this."

"Adieu, monsieur," I answered, "I think you'll find your triumph, dearly bought, smacks twice as sweet as one that lacks much labor."

CHAPTER XII

THE REGENT READS A RIDDLE

"PARDIEU!" cried the vicomte, "it would be worth five hundred pistoles to see him at the Louvre."

"Why don't you go, then?"

"Will you come too?"

"I? Hardly. I will ride hard and far, my friend, to tilt it out with fame, but as for notoriety—mon Dieu! the Louvre and the Hôtel de Noailles are some five thousand leagues apart. The journey is too great. Alas! if she and I but knew it all alone and could cherish it as a sweet secret all our lives! but that's impossible, it must out—so out with it, blow it about, blazon it abroad, but I will none of it."

The vicomte laughed.

"The court, dear friend," said he, "when they have heard the play and praised the actor, will clamor for the author. I give M. le Duc a half an hour; then we shall have them here."

And M. le Vicomte de Noailles was right; in fact in less than half an hour we heard the

coaches come. First, M. de Coislin, M. de Montboissier-Beaufort-Canillac and Madame de Sainte-Triaize de Poitiers, weighed with wonder, and crying, "Magnificent! astonishing! astounding!" And while I bowed to the bombardment and faced the fire firmly, more hoofs and wheels and noisy lackeys, and lo! Madame de Sassenay, Madame la Duchesse de Vivonne, Madame de Longueville, and M. le Prince de Choiseul d'Aillecourt, quite out of breath, so fast had M. le Duc, king of the winds that whisper, blown them in triumph from the Louvre. They were still agog, aghast, agape, open-mouthed, and spellbound, but when they found their tongues, the clash of adjectives and exclamations was deafening. Hat in hand, I bowed bravely to the storm, while M. de Noailles did the honors with his never-failing grace. More trumpeting! M. le Cardinal de Lemoine, Madame la Comtesse de Coulanges, M. de Ruillé, Mademoiselle de Crequi, and so they came in whirl on whirl from the high hall where the crowned quidnunc M. le Duc, the Æolus of the winds that wag, was hurling us the hurricane. In short, the salons of the Hôtel de Noailles were overflowing and the French language running short of adjectives, when fi-

nally the crowd began to thin and surged away at last, leaving behind a wide wake of wonder.

A quarter of an hour was not given us to draw breath when we beheld M. le Duc, his nose beaming with the fatness of satisfaction, a self-contented man from his wig to his red heels. We dined gloriously, and since laughter aids digestion, we might have gorged ourselves in safety, had we been so disposed, for we roared continuously. M. le Duc did not let us lose a single point, painting in turn, interest aroused, curiosity convulsive, and mouth-wide wonder with such delightful piquancy that the tears ran down our cheeks. But when he warmed to his climax—"I have told you it was a coach and six, guess who? I give you five, I give you ten, I give you one hundred guesses"—and placed before our eyes our friends, the hurricane, dazzled and dumfounded, all ears, an unimaginable, interrogative nobility, one gorgeous, glittering, laced, embroidered interrogation, bursting at his word into a miracle of oh! ho! ho! what! what! hey-day! hem! hem! ma foi! mon Dieu! my life! humph! zounds! 'sdeath! par-dieu!—we shrieked until our sides were sore.

"M. le Duc," said the vicomte, raising his

glass, "for this sweet hour I shall be long your debtor, and so—I drink your health."

"And I, M. le Duc," I said, "salute you in the name of art. Your lines are limned with a true touch, your light and shade adjusted to a hair, your canvas glows with wit, and so—I drink your health."

M. le Duc de Druillon d'Ormesson saluted us.

"Messieurs," he cried, "an artist's inspiration is his audience, and when *you* front the stage, messieurs, a dumb man would wax eloquent, and so—I drink your health."

We rose from table, but before we reached the blue salon, the vicomte's lackey announced, "Monsieur le Prince de Choiseul d'Aillecourt."

"What!" cried the vicomte, "back so soon, M. le Prince? Have you dined?"

"Dined!" cried the prince in his hearty gruff voice, "do I look it? No, I've been cudgeling the backs of greasy fools who blocked me. Ha! ha! You've heard the news, I suppose. The regent has arrested Broussel and Blancmesnil."

"Ho! ho!" cried M. le Duc, "the firebrands of the Parliament!"

"The regent," said I, "has read the council's riddle."

"And the regent's solution," added the vicomte, "surely shows the regent's perfect taste."

"Of course," said the prince, "these Gentlemen of the Robe are much too arrogant."

"Oh! by half!" cried M. le Duc. "Their business is to *register*. I have told some of them so several times."

"And what answer did they give you, M. le Duc?" said the prince.

"Parbleu! monsieur, they said *pish!*"

"Which means, I take it,—go to the devil! Gentlemen, they have said *pish!* again and quite loudly. Her Majesty the Regent fancies they have said *pish!* to her. No, gentlemen. They have said *pish!* but they have said it to His Eminence the Cardinal Mazarin."

"Ho! ho!" cried M. le Duc, "His Eminence!"

"Here is the difficulty, gentlemen," continued the Prince de Choiseul d'Aillecourt, "here is the difficulty. I say the Gentlemen of the Robe are too arrogant. I say the Gentlemen of the Robe have but one excuse for existence, namely, to *register*. I say 'Down with the Gentlemen of the Robe!' but I also say *pish!* to His Eminence the Cardinal Mazarin."

"Come, come," said the vicomte, laughing,

"this is politics. It is barred at the Hôtel de Noailles."

"Barred or not," said the prince, "it will come in, for it is making the devil's own row just now."

"What! what!" cried M. le Duc.

"About Broussel?" cried the vicomte. "Nonsense! Who is Broussel, anyway?"

"The hero of the canaille for the moment," said the prince. "Oh! I have seen the whole thing: M. de Comminges, captain of the guards, driving off with his prisoner, and Broussel's *femme de chambre*—St. Jude! a weasel!—squeaking from an upper window, 'Help! help! They are carrying off my master!'"

"Good heavens! monsieur," cried M. le Duc, his nose twitching with excitement, "why did you not say so before?"

"You shall hear all," said the prince. "The mob gathers, piling paving-stones as usual, and since it must *Vive!* somebody, why it is 'Vive Broussel!' Chains are run across the street; the coach of the captain of the guards is upset; my coach is blocked; my valets use their cudgels on greasy knaves; I use mine; the way is not cleared. Grocers and apothecaries appear in

shirt-sleeves with halberds in their hands; peaceable citizens stick their snouts out of upper windows and squint behind arquebuses; the mob bawls 'Broussel!' the sergeants draw swords and let the wind escape more rapidly from a few of the noisiest. In fine there is a delightful set to, and considerable blood is spilt. I receive the captain of the guards and his prisoner into my coach. They drive like mad for St. Germain. The thing spreads; the shops are shut; the crowd grows in an instant to a mass, the mass to a mob; the cry is 'Broussel! Long live the king!' and 'Liberty for Broussel!' I depart for the Rue St. Honoré and arrive here."

"On foot?" cried M. le Duc.

"On foot," said the prince.

"Mon Dieu!"

"And the mob?" cried the vicomte.

"The brats are jumping and jostling at the Pont Neuf, awaiting M. de Retz, who has hanged them, just as he came from mass—cape, lawn sleeves, and all—and whom they have bid bear their 'Vive Broussel!' to the regent with the very loyal intimation that they themselves will follow soon. You see, my dear vicomte, it is, as I have said, the devil's own row."

"I should think it was," cried the vicomte. "It is treason against the king!"

"Not at all, not at all," said the prince, "it is *pish!* to the Cardinal Mazarin, and I, a peer of France, say *pish!* to the Cardinal Mazarin."

"Monsieur le Prince de Choiseul d'Aillecourt," I cried, "this is no time to discuss the pros and cons of *pish!* whatever we may think. We are of the nobility of France, and in the day of danger, our place is by the regent's side. Come then, gentlemen,—to the Louvre!"

CHAPTER XIII

THE REGENT OUTRIDDED

THEY agreed at once to my proposition, and we set out in the coach of M. de Noailles. At the Louvre everything appeared as usual until we reached the antechamber, but there we found much agitation and as many opinions as there were people present. There were few ladies at that hour, and nobody of moment except Madame de Longueville, who was surrounded by a crowd of men. The Prince de Choiseul d'Aillecourt was instantly in demand and related his experience so delightfully that Madame de Longueville and the other ladies laughed heartily and thought the whole affair delicious. M. le Duc ran here and there after his nose, gathering information from one or another with much pleasure. The vicomte and I asked for an audience, and, while waiting, were buttonholed by Monsieur d'O and compelled to swallow his opinions.

He was a man frequently at court, gouty, fat, boastful, ambitious, tricky, and truckling, but by

bowing and scraping everywhere and climbing a hundred stairs a day, he had gained the ears of many people. His effrontery was audacious. With him it was always, "Mons. le Duc" has told me so and so, or "Mons. le Prince" said this or that, for he honored nobody with monsieur in full, and as for the Princes of the Blood—he talked about "the Prince de Conti" to the scandal of everybody. I have heard him preface a story with, "My friend, Mons. Turenne, said to me," whereas M. de Turenne was probably ignorant of his existence. As I have said, we were buttonholed, much to our disgust, by this brass pot and compelled to hear him burble.

"De Noailles," said he, "I perceive a precipice."

"Then, sir," said the vicomte, coldly, "jump in."

"I have told Mons. de Longueville what I think ought to be done," continued M. d'O, paying no attention to the vicomte's remark, "We should squelch the Parliament."

"Your opinion," said I, "will doubtless have great weight, but it is now the mob that demands attention."

"Pooh! pooh! Mons. de Longueville said the

same, but quite agrees with me now. You are going to get an audience, are you not?"

We gave him no answer.

"Of course you are," said he. "You may like a point or two. You will find when you get in there that Mons. de Longueville and Mons. Villeroiy quite agree with me. You desire my opinion; you shall have it. The first thing to do is to get Mons. the President of the Parliament and read him a fine speech. Tell him he's a fool, a knave and a jackass to boot. If you want a draft, I have one in my pocket that can be finished in five minutes, and I think ——"

"M. d'O," said I, "your draft is a document of importance—give it to a lackey and tell him to spit on it. Your thoughts are precious—put them in a pot and bury them. You are a personage—go to the Faubourg St. Antoine and pick up some dirty lout to teach you manners," and then as the door of the regent's cabinet opened, we passed in, leaving Impudence aghast.

Her Majesty's cabinet offered an interesting spectacle. M. de Retz, the coadjutor, in cape, lawn sleeves and all as M. le Prince had told us, was bowing to the regent whose swelling anger was thinly veiled by a gauze of urbanity. His

Eminence, smiling maliciously and endeavoring to appear at ease, was trembling in reality. M. le Duc d'Orléans, a miracle of finery, powdered and touched with rouge, appeared bored. M. le Maréchal de Villeroy was laughing with M. de Giutaut, a Captain of the Guard, while the Abbé de la Rivière was impassive and was mainly occupied in posing so that his black robe might fall as gracefully as possible.

I bowed with the vicomte to the regent.

"Ah," said Her Majesty, "here are two gentlemen from whom we may learn the truth."

"Your Majesty has learned the truth from me," said M. de Retz. "The commotion is already serious and threatens to become more so."

"How sir!" said the regent, proudly, "are you disloyal too? Your fine phrases are calculated to excite the rebellion you pretend to deprecate. You shall see, sir, that the king's authority will restore order."

"Your Majesty is in error," said the coadjutor, bowing. "I have met the mob; I have seen their eyes. Order is not to be had for the asking. If Your Majesty desires it, you must give Broussel in exchange for it."

The regent stood her height.

"M. de Retz!" she cried, "do you dare to dictate terms in my palace? Take care, sir! take care!"

His Eminence the Cardinal Mazarin came forward with an oily smile.

"Your Majesty," said he with an infectiously cajoling air, "I wish that it might please God to make every one speak with the same sincerity as M. de Retz. He fears for his flock, for the city and for the authority of Your Majesty. I by no means apprehend that the danger is so imminent, but I am satisfied, Your Majesty, that M. de Retz has spoken religiously according to the dictates of his conscience," and all this with a side glance at the coadjutor which said plainly, "When I'm on top again, you beggar, I'll sing another tune."

The regent's brow cleared.

"M. de Retz," said she, graciously, "we thank you for your zeal. It has been somewhat warm, somewhat misplaced, perhaps, but still we thank you for your zeal."

The coadjutor answered by a low bow.

"Your Majesty," said M. le Duc d'Orléans, raising his snuff-box with a careless air, "these discussions are very distracting. As a solution

of the difficulty, I propose that we all repair to St. Cloud. We shall arrive in time for the play."

The regent gave M. le Duc d'Orléans a glance that made him take a pinch of snuff with sudden animation.

"Ah," said M. l'Abbé de la Rivière, giving an extra twist to his black robe, "I think it somewhat absurd that we spend this fine afternoon dancing attendance upon a mob. This mob—what is it?—a heterogeneous collection of persons without rank or precedence, smelling very foully and with very bad breaths. I think them quite ridiculous and not worthy of notice."

"Your sense is sound, M. l'Abbé," said the Duc d'Orléans, and the two bowed to one another with grace.

The regent, meanwhile, had gone to the further end of the cabinet, where she was talking in low tones to the cardinal. M. de Noailles was by my side, while M. de Retz still remained fixed, awaiting his *congé*; we were thus for some moments. Then the door opened, and the Maréchal de la Meilleraye entered in an atmosphere of security and serenity. He glanced about with the air of a man puffed with his own perspicacity, and who,

being himself enlightened, proposes to enlighten others.

"M. le Maréchal," cried the regent, as soon as she perceived him, "what news do you bring us? Is it true, sir, as I have heard from M. de Retz, that Paris is rebellious, that you who command my troops have permitted it?"

"Paris rebellious?" replied the maréchal, bowing with his plumed hat beneath his arm. "Your Majesty is pleased to jest. I have surveyed the field. This mob, this shabby, scrubby, scurvy mob—what is it? A flea-bite, a mole-hill, a cobweb, a weed. What! does it alarm Your Majesty! It is a plaything, a popgun, a paper-pellet—I have but to snap my fingers and it vanishes!"

The regent turned triumphantly to M. de Retz.

"You hear, Monsieur le Coadjuteur," she cried. "Go back to your mighty mob, your clamoring canaille, and tell them that the regent *orders* order!"

"I trust that Your Majesty may not soon have cause to repent your error," said M. de Retz.

Before the regent could answer, or the coadjutor reach the door, we beheld the civil-lieutenant, M. Dreux d'Aubray, breathless, disheveled,

terror-torn, and rushing without preface or apology.

"Your Majesty!" he gasped, "Oh! Your Majesty! lose no time. I am here as by a miracle. My coach was attacked on the Place du Châtelet. They are armed and in red riot. They crowd the Quai de la Mégisserie, they run like rats to the Pont Neuf. Mon Dieu! my ears howl still with 'Broussel!'"

The triumph in the regent's eyes faded and fled, but she held herself as proudly as ever, and her white bosom rose and fell almost imperceptibly.

"Pooh! pooh!" cried M. de Villeroy, coming forward in his turn, "an old song! M. Dreux d'Aubray."

"Pooh! pooh!" echoed the Abbé de la Rivière, "a fish-wife's tale!"

"M. lieutenant," cried the Maréchal de la Meilleraye, pompously, "I am a war-horse. I do not snort at scarecrows."

His Eminence the Cardinal Mazarin was sunk in the shadow of a curtain. M. le Duc d'Orléans looked at his snuff-box; the Captain Giutaut was a statue; M. de Noailles tapped his foot impatiently; the civil-lieutenant stood panting and dejected, and on us all the regent's proud glance fell

as she turned her head from side to side. And when her eyes met mine: "Monsieur le Comte de Lannoy," she cried, "the regent is outriddled. Can you solve it?"

"Your Majesty," said I, "the regent desires to add to the crown jewels the pearl, tranquillity, but the regent cannot ascertain its price. With Your Majesty's permission, I will go to the Pont Neuf and bring to the regent the price of the pearl."

CHAPTER XIV

THE PRICE OF THE PEARL

"My dear Noailles," I said, when we had entered the antechamber, "did you ever see anything equal to M. le Duc d'Orléans? St. Cloud and the play, indeed!—and he lieutenant-general of the kingdom!"

"One would hardly think that Monsieur was the father of Mademoiselle," said the vicomte, laughing.

"Oh! as to that," said I, "it is nature's riddle, for she is more Montpensier than Orléans, more Henri IV. than he."

We crossed the antechamber where the crowd was great and the commotion greater, passed the halberds of the musketeers, gained our coach, and cried, "To the Pont Neuf!" We could hear the shouting when we reached the Quai du Louvre, and at the Quai de la Mégisserie, a barricade of paving-stones and chains blocked us. "We must go on foot," said I, springing out. The vicomte did likewise.

The sparkling Seine was flowing by our side.

About the stone arches of the Pont Neuf were little craft of many kinds filled with motley crews, who rowed rapidly or remained stationary under the buttresses of the bridge, grappling here and there with hooks. The bridge itself, spreading its two great arms from the Ile de la Cité to the banks, was filled with the surging, swaying mob—a mass of unkept heads, pikes, pitchforks, arquebuses, rising and falling, bounding and backing before the stiff straight line that marked the bright halberds of the Royal Guard, above which in the pulse of all the press the laureled Henri IV. sat his bronze horse, serene. The Palais de Justice, its portals swarming with the rabble, frowned on the Place Dauphine, where law was lax, while in the distance, beyond, above the wrath and wrong of men, Our Lady raised her stately jeweled fingers to the sun.

We forced our way to the bridge amid a clash and clang of "Broussel!" "Vive Broussel!" "Liberty for Broussel!" "Long live the king!" "Down with Mazarin!" "Broussel! Broussel! Broussel!" Further progress was impossible.

"Mon Dieu!" cried the vicomte, holding his scented lace to his nose, "the stench of these sweating pigs stifles me!"

"Their smell is strong, my friend," said I, "so strong in fact that, if they get it once inside the Louvre, it will take blood by bucketfuls to wash us clean again."

Some shook their fists before the faces of the Royal Guard. "Your hearts," they cried, "will look well on our pikes. Your guts need sunning; we'll punch your red bellies and let the bright light in!" Others danced about, tossing their filthy caps and howling the latest ditty which the book-stalls of the Pont Neuf were scattering, and the refrain of which ran:

"Come, comrades, kick the sabots high,
And shout and make a din.
We'll rave and roar 'til Broussel's free,
And we've ripped Mazarin."

"Ha!" cried one, pushing to us and shoving aside the vicomte's lackeys, who kept a small space for us, "Lords of the court! playthings for princesses! lap-dogs for duchesses! Go tell the old red fox we are coming to get Broussel."

The fellow was a smith of some kind or other, big-boned and broad, with a mass of coarse hair hanging over his scabby eyebrows and down his dirty neck where sweat and soot were bed-fellows. His red shirt was open, showing a

broad breast covered with black hair as thick as tangled brushwood; a leather strap made his culottes keep company with his shirt, while his bare legs brave with black bristles ended in his sabots. His nose was flat, his teeth not bad, and he kept opening and shutting his mouth with a munching sound, and there he was, fresh from his forge and fire, a hammer in his hand, and ready to pay his respects to any one from the regent to the devil.

As the fellow approached, M. de Noailles instinctively put his hand on his sword, but I touched his arm and laughed. "Folly, my friend," said I, and in truth it was, for there were ten thousand or more in the mob; they could have chewed us before the Royal Guard reached the spot.

"Well, little one," said I, clapping the burly smith on the shoulder, although I ruined my lace in the process, "I see you have your bellows in your windpipe. Ma foi! you blow a hot fire. What's all this row?"

The black bear seemed somewhat surprised and stuck his flat snout at me. "Vive Broussel!" he grunted.

"Of course," said I, "every one must live, so

I laughed and turned to the vicomte.

"We've seen enough," said I, "is it not so?"

"Oh, by my faith!"

Again I turned to the broad-backed smith.

"Come, M. le forgeron," I cried, "clear us a wide way to our coach!"

The fellow set about it with a will. "Back!" he cried, pushing the louts to right and left, "back, I say! back!" And they obeyed him—aye! him and his big hammer—and we went—mon Dieu! the Princes of the Blood do not always stride so easily through the press of courtiers nor find their way so clear. And when we were in, the lackeys up behind, I saluted him—a curious thing to do. "My friend," said I, "one gains much knowledge at the wide Pont Neuf that is not sold in stalls." Then the whips cracked, and we left the black bear among his horde, still muttering, "By G—d! a miracle! he talked the same as me."

"Lannoy!" cried the vicomte, as the horses whirled us toward the Louvre, "how, by all the saints at once, dost thou manage these fellows?"

"Faugh! I manage well with the canaille because I know how to talk to such people. If they are women, chuck them under the chin and

toss them a coin, and they are at your feet. If men, give them an occasional nod and say, 'bon jour, mon enfant.' For in truth they are all children and remain so when their heads are gray. They expect to be stamped on, and if you give them an occasional nod, they run and put up a *Pater Noster* for you. In fact the art of smiling and bowing at the right time is one of the secrets of governing in France;" and then we reached the Louvre.

We lost little time in arriving at Her Majesty's cabinet, and the first gentleman of the chamber none in announcing us. The regent had withdrawn; M. le Duc d'Orléans too had disappeared, presumably to St. Cloud, but we were much edified to behold still His Eminence the Cardinal Mazarin, M. le Maréchal de la Meilleraye, and the Abbé de la Rivière. We saluted them, and the vicomte whispered to me, "Ah, the fox, the lion, and the monkey."

"Oh, I quite agree with you," I said, softly, "as to the first and last, but as to M. le Maréchal, it is the ass in the lion's skin."

Then His Eminence the Cardinal Mazarin approached with half-shut eyes and a smile like a steel trap.

"M. le Comte," said he, "you have, I believe, been pricing pearls. Do they come high?"

"The price of a pearl, Your Eminence," I answered, "depends upon the pearl itself and upon its scarcity in a particular place. In a hospital, health is a pearl and comes very high; in a mausoleum, life is a pearl and comes very high; in the courts of law, justice is a pearl and comes very high; in a nunnery, man is a pearl and comes very high; in the Parliament, sense is a pearl and comes very high; in a salon of duchesses, virtue is a pearl and comes very high; in a chamber of peers, wit is a pearl and comes very high; in the council of state, honor is a pearl and comes very high; in the church, integrity is a pearl and comes very high; in the court of a king, truth is a pearl and comes very high; in a college of cardinals, all these are pearls and come very high," and I bowed to His Eminence.

He gave me a glance which showed me plainly that he and I stood, daggers-drawn, till fortune flung one of us a *coup de grâce*, and then the regent came.

"Monsieur le Comte de Lannoy," she cried, "what answer do you bring us? Is it the mob

of M. Dreux d'Aubray or is it the mole-hill of M. le Maréchal that we have before us?"

"It is the mob, Your Majesty, the mob roaring and rioting, the mob daring and determined, and if Your Majesty desires again the pure pearl, tranquillity, you must pay the price and give Broussel in exchange for it."

"What!" cried the regent, hotly, "are you M. de Retz over again? Your lips, M. le Comte, must taste strangely in uttering such words."

"The lips of the Comte de Lannoy, Your Majesty, are more accustomed to utter such words than are the regent's ears to hear them, for they are truth."

And then the first gentleman of the chamber, as though bent on my destruction, opened the double doors and cried a word—a single word which sent my blood to my head and my brain to my heart—"Mademoiselle!"

CHAPTER XV

THE GUARD OF MADEMOISELLE

Yes, it was Mademoiselle, she who had flashed over the highway of my life at Athis-Mons, she whose white scarf at that moment crossed my breast, she whom I loved—aye! she for whom I led my life charge—a forlorn hope!—and would lead till the world had weighed me.

And then she came, in a long white robe that clasped her with a firm true touch and tossed the billowy lace about her shoulders—aye! then she came, through bending heads and beating hearts, the bugles of her beauty and the drums of her pride swelling her triumph train!

His Eminence saluted her courteously but coldly, M. le Maréchal de la Meilleraye with a fine flourish, his hand on his sword, the Abbé de la Rivière performing an admirable contortion, M. de Noailles with his accustomed grace, and I?—I bowed as I had done at Athis-Mons. The regent alone stood erect, flushed, and the fury my words had given her still in her eyes.

"Your Majesty," said Mademoiselle, making the court courtesy in her own regal way, "I come to complain of His Eminence."

"Complain of me?" said the Cardinal Mazarin, gliding forward in his red robes and with his sweet, slippery smile.

"Complain of His Eminence?" said the regent, somewhat piqued, "pray explain, Mademoiselle."

"Since His Eminence is Prime Minister of France, it devolves upon him to secure the safety of His Majesty's subjects, especially the Princesses of the Blood."

"I presume," said the regent, haughtily, "that you refer to the state of Paris."

"On the contrary, Your Majesty, I do not refer to Paris at all, but to the fact that, although His Eminence has proudly informed us that outlaws are at an end in France, a Princesse of the Blood cannot go to Choisy without being waylaid."

"What!" cried the regent.

"Oh, it is quite true, Your Majesty. My coach was held up at Athis-Mons only yesterday, and but for Monsieur le Comte de Lannoy," (here she gave me a charming smile) "I cannot say what might have happened."

"Mon Dieu!" cried the Abbé de la Rivière.

The cardinal looked at me out of the corners of his eyes, the regent regarded me with surprise, while I was aware that I was blushing like a fool.

"Indeed?" said Her Majesty.

M. de Noailles, who had been fidgeting impatiently, could remain silent no longer.

"He risked his life, Your Majesty," he cried, "yes, risked it a hundred times, for he fought Ruffo de Bonneval."

"Ah," said His Eminence, sarcastically, "Ruffo de Bonneval! There are a thousand crowns for his head, no doubt M. le Comte will claim the reward."

I was mad enough to run him through.

"The Comte de Lannoy," said I, "presents to His Eminence the Cardinal Mazarin the thousand crowns and begs that His Eminence will use them in hiring a bourgeois to teach him the distinction between a lackey and a lord."

Mademoiselle gave me a triumphant glance.

"And so, Your Majesty," she continued, "I started for the Louvre with the intention of requesting from the regent a guard that I might journey at my pleasure through this France which His Eminence has rendered so safe and

secure, but I find that the regent needs a guard much more than I."

Her Majesty paced to and fro furiously.

"This is shameful!" she cried. "You come to witness the humiliation of the regent, you come to triumph at it!"

"Your Majesty wrongs me," said Mademoiselle, proudly, "I come to take my place, where, in the day of danger, a Princesse of the Blood should be—at the regent's side!"

The regent was not mollified.

"The day of danger!" she cried, scornfully. "One would fancy that the king's authority was no longer feared in France. In the time of the late queen, the Parliament and the people permitted M. le Prince de Condé to be imprisoned without a murmur, and now because I see fit to stop the babbling of this Broussel, this boor, this clown, this vulgar fellow, I must be brow-beaten in my own palace by M. de Retz, I must have my courtiers bring me the ultimatum of a vile rabble. It is outrageous!" and the regent, her white hands clenched and her bosom swelling with her wounded pride, paced the floor in rage.

"Ah! it is indeed outrageous that Your Majesty should be so annoyed," said the Maréchal de

la Meilleraye in a fawning tone, "and so unnecessarily. This mob—I have already assured Your Majesty it is a myth, a maggot, a romance, a rhapsody, a flight of fancy, in short a conceit, a cloud which I can puff at a word into vacuity."

"Oh! quite unnecessary! quite ridiculous!" echoed the Abbé de la Rivière.

Mademoiselle laughed merrily.

"I have seldom heard anything so elegantly expressed, M. le Maréchal," said she, which caused the maréchal to make her the most extravagant bow, "but unfortunately for your logic, the mob is a reality, a stern reality, monsieur."

"And pray, Mademoiselle," said the cardinal, in a frigid manner, "who has enlightened you upon the subject of this mob?"

"I have enlightened myself, monseigneur, for I have seen it."

"What!" cried the regent, "has there been rioting at the Luxembourg?"

"I have not perceived it," said Mademoiselle, haughtily, "but Your Majesty may remember that the most direct way from the Luxembourg to the Louvre is by the Pont Neuf."

"What!" cried the regent in consternation, "you have been at the Pont Neuf?"

"I have driven over the Pont Neuf," said Mademoiselle, holding her beautiful head erect, "and I have the honor to inform Your Majesty that the mob is a reality."

"Good God!" whispered M. de Noailles, "she came through that rabble!"

I could make no answer, but kept my eyes upon her. His Eminence grew pale.

"Mademoiselle," said he, "did you have the musketeers to bring you through?"

"The musketeers? Ma foi! Monseigneur, I had no musketeers. I came in my coach with my postillions and my *dame d'atour*."

The regent and His Eminence were speechless.

"Mademoiselle," said M. de Noailles, his voice trembling with emotion, "you mean that you came unguarded through that roaring rabble? What in God's name did they do when they saw you?"

"Made way for me, of course, monsieur."

"And you had no fear?" cried the cardinal, dumfounded.

"Fear? Monseigneur le Cardinal, I have on the Pont Neuf a proud protector who grants me a safe-conduct better than a thousand musketeers, for when Mademoiselle de Montpensier stands at

the foot of the statue of her bronze grandsire, Henri IV., there does not live the man in France dares do her aught but homage."

We heard a distant murmur from the Quai du Louvre that swelled louder and clearer, and, rumbling and roaring, hurled aloft at last a single name that seemed to beat and batter the casements of the regent's cabinet, "Broussel! Broussel! Broussel!" It shook the Cardinal Mazarin from head to heel, it made the Maréchal de la Meilleraye a trembling clown, it pounded the abbé to a praying idiot, it blanched the regent's cheek for all her pride. It was the mob, maddened by waiting, and even now flooding with its van the courtyard of the Louvre from which the Royal Guard, battle as they might, had not been able to repel it.

The doors of the cabinet were thrown open, and we saw Madame de Sassenay, Madame la Duchesse de Vivonne, and Madame de Coulanges flutter like frightened doves to the regent's feet where they fell, crying to her to save them and yield to the popular clamor. In truth it was high time, for the courtyard was crowded to suffocation, and through the dreadful din came the shouts, "Down with the fox!" "Liberty for Broussel!" "Broussel! Broussel! Broussel!"

And then, before any one could anticipate her, Mademoiselle glided proudly across the cabinet, seized the handles of the great double windows firmly, flung them back and stepped out upon the balcony. For an instant, the courtyard of the Louvre might have been a desert, so deep was the silence, the next and with a blast like ten thousand bugles the Louvre shook with her name.

To my mind France never saw a sight like that again. His Eminence shrivelled behind a curtain, quivering and quaking; the abbé hiding his head in the cushions of a couch; the maréchal holding his sword in a hand that shook its point rattling on the floor; the regent biting her blanched lips amid the sobbing, shrieking women at her feet, and throned on the high balcony the palladium of the monarchy, clad in the long white robe that clasped her with the firm true touch and tossed the billowy lace about her shoulders, bending her haughty head and wafting from side to side the kisses of her diamond-glancing fingers, while the pikes and the arquebuses bowed before her, and the dirty caps danced upward in her honor, keeping time to the thundering, thudding chorus—"Vive Mademoiselle!"

CHAPTER XVI

A WIND OF THE FRONDE

THAT night the vicomte and I supped late at the Hôtel de Noailles. Peace had come again to distracted Paris, for the regent, daring to delay no longer, had signed the order for Broussel's release, and the mob had escorted him in triumph to his home. I witnessed that procession; I witnessed also the ovation they gave Mademoiselle when she left the Louvre for her palace of the Luxembourg, and I noticed with a certain sense of pleasure, though why I cannot say, that my friend, the black bear, was marching proudly beside her coach. She gave me her hand as she left the Louvre, and as I bent to kiss it, she said, laughing, "Do you know what I shall always remember about Athis-Mons, Monsieur le Comte?"

"What? Mademoiselle," said I.

"These words, monsieur: 'Tis Jeanne d'Albret who gave us Henri IV.'"

And then she was in her coach, the people shouting her name on every side.

We supped late, as I have said, the vicomte and I, in the vicomte's little cabinet, its walls brave with the arms and armor of the House of Noailles. Casques, cuirasses, greaves, gauntlets, swords, spurs, lances, flashed in the light of the two eight-armed silver candlesticks on the table. There was the stout blade of Hugues-François-Hyacinthe-Xavier, Connétable in his day, which bore still the dents of Marignano; there, too, was the mighty battle-ax of that giant Urbain-René who fell, crashing like an oak, at Crécy. Ma foi! had we had more that day like Urbain, Crécy would have cried us conquerors. We supped thus in the little cabinet, I and the Vicomte de Noailles, the battle-harness of his silent sires fronting us on every side. And he was worthy of his race. Yes, for all his jeweled finery, his cloak of cloth of gold, his red vest trimmed with minever, his perfumes and his lace, he was a bold lance, a sure swordsman, a firm friend. While we were still with the wine, a lackey announced the Duc de Druillon d'Ormesson, and we beheld the thin figure of M. le Duc beautifully arrayed in black velvet and white satin.

"M. le Duc," said the vicomte, laughing, "you

find here, unfortunately, people who know everything and who have seen everything and to whom you can bring no news."

M. le Duc chuckled.

"Ho! ho!" said he, "but I am not sure of that. Here is a bit for you. The regent, the king, and the cardinal set out to-night for St. Germain, for after what has happened to-day, the regent declares she will remain no longer in Paris—'a hot-bed of rebels'—I give you Her Majesty's very words."

"You are a magician in truth," said I, "how did you learn this?"

"From Madame de Sassenay, to whom Her Majesty confided some necessary particulars."

"And who has in her turn confided them to you—in absolute secrecy, I suppose?"

"Exactly."

We all laughed.

"When do they go?" inquired the vicomte.

"At four in the morning. I have another bit for you. They have begun to *fronder* the cardinal."

"To what?" said I.

"To *fronder* His Eminence. Good gracious! I thought you were people satiated with know-

ing and seeing everything, and it seems you know nothing at all. Here is the fact; I have it from M. de Retz himself. While you are at the Pont Neuf, His Eminence and M. de Retz engage in a delightful bit of buff and rebuff regarding the Parliament, which finishes by His Eminence remarking contemptuously that 'the Paris Parliament are schoolboys *fronding* in the Paris ditches.' This choice bit, M. de Retz, as any sensible man would, trumpets far and wide. Result; they are *fronding* the cardinal. To-morrow we shall have hats and gloves à la Fronde, and they have already a song at the Pont Neuf—let me see, can I recall it? I have not much voice, but you shall hear," and M. le Duc, throwing back his head, sang in a damnably discordant discord:

"A wind of the Fronde has this morning set in;
I think that it blows against the Mazarin."

We roared with laughter.

"My dear Duc," cried the vicomte, "who was your singing-master?"

"I cannot now recall," said M. le Duc, "but I'll not be made game of!"

"Heaven forbid!" cried the vicomte. "I was

anxious to know because I wanted to engage him. We have next month at Madame la Duchesse de Vivonne's a comedy, 'Balaam's Ass.' I am to play the ass, and I am anxious to bray well."

"Parbleu!" cried M. le Duc, hotly, "for a louis I'd challenge you."

"Come, come, messieurs," said I, "let us have no *fronding* at the Hôtel de Noailles. The question now, M. le Duc, is who goes to St. Germain and who remains in Paris?"

"If you go to St. Germain," said M. le Duc, "you're a Mazarin. If you remain in Paris, you are a Frondeur."

"A subtle distinction, by my faith!" cried the vicomte.

"Gentlemen," said I, rising and holding high my glass, "a toast! The health of M. le Duc de Druillon d'Ormesson, *Gazette de France!*"

"With all my heart," cried the vicomte, "M. le Duc, yours to command!"

"Gentlemen," cried M. le Duc, "your most obedient!"

And the glasses were drained.

"M. le Comte has done well," said the vicomte, "but I go him one better."

And laughing, he sang with charming voice and manner:

“If monsieur has lost at play,
If madame has been too gay,
If His Eminence has sniffed another scent;
If a councillor clears his throat,
If a *maréchal* buys a coat,
We’ve a valve to give it *vent*—Monsieur le Duc!”

And at the last words he saluted M. le Duc with a splendid flourish.

“M. le Vicomte,” cried M. le Duc, entranced, “I am your humble servant.”

“My dear Noailles,” said I, “I go you one better,” and rising in my turn, I sang to the vicomte’s air:

“If a comtesse cheats at cards,
If a fishwife flirts the guards,
If the Parliament has balked at a decree;
If the regent winks a wink,
If a duchesse takes a drink,
We shall learn it when we *see*—Monsieur le Duc!”

And bringing my heels together, I bowed with a frolicsome fanfaronade.

“M. le Comte,” cried the ecstatic Duc, “you overwhelm me.”

“And to you,” cried the vicomte:

"If the Comte de Baudeaupaulle
 Scales a lofty convent-wall,
 And adores an ancient abbess for a blind;
 If a prince has had a fit,
 Or a peer has proved a wit,
 We shall hear it when we *find*—Monsieur le Duc!"

"To you again," I cried:

"If a brigand has been bold,
 If the king has caught a cold,
 If two gentlemen have struck swords in the street;
 If we're hunting in the dark
 For a secret that won't bark,
 We shall get it when we *greet*—Monsieur le Duc!"

"Gentlemen," cried M. le Duc, bowing,
 "words cannot express——"

"And to you," cried the vicomte:

"If the Princes Poix and Pallet
 Race and rush the corps de ballet,
 If the Abbé Rivière is late to mass;
 If the Marquise de Saint-Mars
 Shoots a scandal to the stars,
 We shall know it when we *pass*—Monsieur le Duc!"

"And again!" I cried:

"But it is not scandal—no!
 That we blare and that we blow.
 It is talk and tittle-tattle,
 Busy, buzzing, idle prattle,
 Gleaned and garnered from the tavern and the hall;
 It is rumor very rife,
 Current, floating, large as life,
 And the man who knows it *all*—Monsieur le Duc!"

M. le Duc had been performing a series of the most admirable bows in quick succession and had now evidently reached the seventh heaven of enchantment.

"My friends!" he cried, "such appreciation! Who would have believed it possible? It quite turns my head!"

"Ah, my dear Duc," said I, "it is but a just tribute to your worth. We are 'rendering to Cæsar.' But come, monsieur, you say the regent, the king and the cardinal start at four o'clock; who else is to go?"

"You have me very nearly there," said M. le Duc, "but not quite, not quite; here is the plan. The royal carriages leave the Louvre secretly and drive to the Cours la Reine, where the Royal Family will be joined by His Eminence and Mademoiselles de Mancini ——"

"The pretty nieces are of the party, are they?" said the vicomte.

"Indeed they are," said M. le Duc, "His Eminence would never leave them behind; they are too useful in his politics."

"My dear Duc," said I, "skip the regent and His Eminence with their appendages and come to the rest."

"As I was about to say," continued M. le Duc, "the royal carriages will await His Eminence, who will certainly join them, and they will be joined probably—observe I say, probably,—by M. le Prince de Condé, by M. le Duc d'Orléans —"

"And Mademoiselle?" I cried, impatiently. "By Mademoiselle?"

"Alas! my glorious reputation," said M. le Duc, "I should say Mademoiselle, probably,—mark the word!—because to give you naked truth I have not been able to learn whether she will go or not."

"Oh! but I must learn," I cried, "there must be no probably about it. I must know definitely. Those who leave Paris now—God knows when they will see it again! If Mademoiselle goes to St. Germain, I go to St. Germain. If Mademoiselle remains in Paris, I remain in Paris. Tomorrow, when the hubbub of this departure is blown about, the gates will be shut so fast that the devil himself could not squeak through. You see I must know to-night."

M. le Duc rubbed his nose.

"Monsieur," said he, after an instant, "the affair is simple. It becomes merely a question of

eyesight. Suppose we meet at four o'clock, without Her Majesty's invitation but not without our swords, upon the Cours la Reine?"

"Capital!" said the vicomte.

"The very thing!" I cried, "the very thing! M. le Duc, you are a genius. Your reputation, which for a moment I feared was slipping from you, you have reconquered at a word. Come, gentlemen, let us fill our glasses and drink—drink to the Cours la Reine!"

We stood about the table, the bright candles flooding us and glancing on the trappings all about us, and clinking our glasses filled with the red arbois—little dreaming of all that was to come in our path before we looked each other in the eyes again—we drank, "To the Cours la Reine!"

"And now, messieurs," said M. le Duc, "for a few brief hours—adieu. I have still another visit to make, and ——"

"Come, come," said the vicomte, merrily, "has Madame de Sassenay another secret?"

"Oh! far from it. This is a very staid affair. It would not interest you all."

"Wonder of wonders!" laughed the vicomte. "Can M. le Duc keep a secret?"

"He can," said M. le Duc, laughing, "when it concerns Monsieur le Duc de Druillon d'Ormesson."

"Ma foi! well put!" I cried.

"Adieu, messieurs," said M. le Duc, from the threshold, "you'll not forget?"

The vicomte, merry as a lark, placed one hand upon his breast, extended the other to M. le Duc, and sang:

"We'll meet you on the Cours la Reine,
The Cours, the Cours la Reine.
Whate'er betide we'll naught abide,
Nor danger shall detain.
Adieu to you ——"

"Adieu to you!" I cried, taking the word from his lip:

"Adieu to you! Our rendezvous
Shall kiss us all again,
When spurred to ride and sword by side,
We seek the Cours la Reine."

CHAPTER XVII

THE HORSES

AT quarter past three in the morning, the vicomte and I left the Hôtel de Noailles. We had had a few hours' sleep and a light collation before starting. When we reached the courtyard, it was so dark that we could distinguish objects with difficulty.

"I don't see the horses," said the vicomte. "Where are they?"

"They are not here," said I, groping about; in fact the courtyard was quite empty.

"And yet," said he, stamping his foot, "I gave the order positively. The clowns have fallen asleep."

"Then," said I, "we must rouse them."

"I'll rouse them," he answered, "I'll rouse them thoroughly."

The vexing part of the performance was that the stables were at some distance in another street; so, gathering our cloaks about us, we started along the Rue des Bons Enfants in a direc-

tion opposite to that we desired to take. At that time the streets of Paris were by no means delightful after nightfall for they were nearly all narrow, dirty and dark—sacré! very dark—with none of those lamps which have been hung in the reign of the present king and render them so different. One stumbled along encountering refuse or loose paving-stones in the gutter, or took the centre and fared equally ill. To have gone comfortably, we should have ridden with lackeys and torches, but lackeys and torches did not suit our present purpose, and as for riding, it would appear our programme did not please the sleepy horses—or their grooms. Therefore in our cloaks and wide boots with clicking spurs we advanced on foot along the Rue des Bons Enfants.

Soon the moon peeped at us through a narrow slit in the clouds and showed us the high black houses that seemed to be struggling to clasp hands over our heads, showed us, too, the chains that crossed the streets at various points, so that we perceived them in a more agreeable manner than by physical contact. "Many thanks, Dame Moon," said I, "I would you had come sooner. My knee aches from the last." Ere long we reached the court of the vicomte's stables, and

crossing it, saw a door ajar, and inside a lantern burning drowsily. We entered.

“Bah!” said M. de Noailles, angrily, before we had gone two paces, “as I thought!” There truly were a couple of grooms in the Noailles livery curled comfortably on their sides among straw and cloaks.

“Sabran! you knave!” cried the vicomte, striding to one, “how dare you? Get up!” and he kicked the sleepy fellow sharply. The groom gave no sign that he had heard or felt voice or boot.

“Zounds! my friend,” said I, “you have a stout sleeper. He must be hitching horses for Morpheus. Let me try the other. Come, sirrah!” I cried with a hard kick, “stir yourself!” but the fellow remained impassive, and then I saw something that made me spring and unhook the lantern. Holding it low, I rolled the groom upon his back.

“See!” I cried to the vicomte.

“Mon Dieu!” he cried, “a dagger!”

“Yes,” said I, “in his heart and to the handle. No wonder he sleeps well. Such a bedfellow is a sure cure for somnambulism—on earth at least.”

"And the other?"

"The same, I wager. We'll roll him over."

We did so. He had no dagger in him, but we saw the ugly wake of one and the blood-soaked jacket.

"This passes belief," cried the vicomte.

"The eyes see stranger things than those they read of," said I, "however, I little thought the things we deemed our aids for this night's ride would block us by a bloody riddle, mountain-high and clamoring for solution."

"Whose work is this?" cried the vicomte, aghast.

"My dear Noailles," said I, "that is the riddle we've no time to solve. We must——"

"Ha!" he cried, "did you hear that noise?"

"What?"

"Horses, I tell you. Listen!"

There was no question now. We heard plainly the sound of horses' hoofs.

"Parbleu!" said I, "they are most considerate to return. It's a wise horse that knows his own stable when one is waiting for him."

We strode to the door. There plainly revealed by the moonlight, which had grown stronger, were our two steeds, entering the courtyard

proudly and tugging at their bits as though they already sniffed their feed. Each was led by a man well muffled in a long cloak, heavy boots and broad chapeau. A third fellow walked by the horses, dressed somewhat better than the others, his hat decked with a curling reddish plume. All three held their swords drawn. The moment I perceived them, I whipped out my blade, and the vicomte did likewise.

"Noailles," said I, "here come our riddle-readers, but I fancy they do not give answers for the asking. We can, perhaps, cross their palms with silver, but more likely we shall cross their bellies with steel." And with that, we stepped out into the courtyard. The cavalcade halted, and he of the red plume came forward a pace or two.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I suppose I have the honor to address M. le Comte de Lannoy and M. le Vicomte de Noailles."

"Your supposition," said I, "does credit to your eyesight, and leads one to infer that you have wit enough to explain how you come here at all and what you are doing with our horses."

His manner changed.

"My coming is a thing apart," said he, gruffly,

"the horses, however, are to the point. Here they are. Do you desire them?"

"Your bravado," I answered, "is a thing apart, your sense is also quite remote, but your stupidity is in evidence. Of course we desire them and quickly too—give them up at once!"

"Yes" cried the vicomte, angrily, "at once! and while you are doing it, explain how you came by them."

The fellow's face grew stern, and I could see his eyes glaring under his hat.

"People do not walk abroad at night to answer questions," said he, "if you want your horses, you must fight for them."

"Zounds!" said I, "how slow you are to spit your thought! How much you choke with your stupidity in doing it! To fight? Why could you not say as much at first and save us all your silly babble. You wear a red cock's feather, and, like a cock, crow much too loud."

"And like a cock, I'll strike my spurs," said he.

"Have at them, then," cried the vicomte, "we must be off."

"On guard!" I cried, "on guard, M. Chanticleer! I'll rattle the gravel in your gizzard."

The fellow faced me, another advanced against the vicomte, the third still held the ribbons of the horses, and we began in earnest. The quiet court rang with the strokes of steel. Yes, he fought well, but he was light of arm and loose of touch, indeed, compared to him I faced at Athis-Mons. I foiled his thrusts, I drove him toward the horses. He dropped his hat with its red plume, and the moon showed me his face, ugly, pale, and grim. I pierced his arm. "A cock," said I, "should crow at daybreak, not before." He was breathing hard and with an oath ran at me, but with a stroke that has ever stood me well, I struck aside his blade and ran him through. His knees bent, and he fell, gasping, in a heap. I gave him no second glance, but ran to the vicomte who was attacked by two, for the third fellow had fastened the horses and hurled himself into the fray to aid his comrades. Ah, my dear Noailles was a swift swordsman! What a strong sight it was and how he kept them both at bay! Old Urbain René, had he seen him then, would have smote his thick thigh with his iron gauntlet joyously. But I came—grinding the odds to powder.

"On guard!" I cried to the lout nearest me, "if you wish still to champ your chops and blow your breath, on guard!"

He whirled about, and my anxiety for the vicomte was over, for no lout, and these knaves were plainly such, could cross swords with M. de Noailles and hope to tell the tale. At me he came in his turn, but he was child's play and as clumsy with a sword as a bourgeoisie with a train. I cut his hand, I cut his arm, I pierced his side; I could have finished him a score of times in as many minutes, but he was such a feeble foe I felt he was not worth a *coup de grâce*. Finally, when I had him, bleeding and blown, lunging he knew not where and at he knew not what, I laughed. "Those who carry swords," said I, "should first learn how to use them." He tried to say something and fell on his face exhausted. The vicomte joined me.

"Here is a night's work," said he. "The moon has shrunk our Paris somewhat for the sun will find her less by five."

"I must impeach your reckoning," said I. "Less, I grant you, but by four and a half for this gurgling fool is not gone yet."

I rolled him over and took his measure.

"He's hit hard," said I, "and—sacré! I've seen that face before. Why what!"

"Monsieur!" gasped the fellow, rolling his eyes at me.

"What! By heaven, it is Lusignan!"

"Lusignan!" cried the vicomte in surprise.

"Who the devil is he?"

"A valet of the Prince de Pajou. Come, help me hold him up."

Lusignan was evidently endeavoring to say something, but his blood choked him. We raised him, and I wiped his mouth.

"Lusignan," said I, sharply, "what is the meaning of all this?"

He muttered incoherently.

"Oh! oh!" said he, "that ever I should have obeyed—no good I knew would come—I dared not—the wife—petit Baptiste—petite Elisée—what will they do?"

"Answer!" I cried sternly, "nothing but *answer*! Do you hear?"

He nodded.

"Who sent you here?"

"M. le Prince."

"De Pajou?"

"Yes."

"Aha!" said I, glancing at the vicomte. "Who was he of the red plume?"

"He—" Here he was seized with a fit of coughing, that made me fear we should lose him at the word, but getting his breath again, he answered weakly, "The heiduque of His Eminence."

"What!" cried the vicomte, springing to his feet.

"For heaven's sake, Noailles!" said I, "support this fellow's shoulders and keep quiet, or we shall lose all."

He knelt again.

"The third?" said I. "Who was he?"

"A servant of the cardinal's."

"And your orders were?"

"To enter the Hôtel de Noailles."

"You went?"

"To the courtyard."

"You did not enter because?"

"The heiduque overheard a page give orders for the horses."

"Then?"

"The heiduque led us to the stables."

"Where you did what?"

Again a fit of coughing, and again I wiped his lips, though I was quivering with impatience.

“Where you did what?” said I.

“Where the heiduque and the other stabbed the grooms.”

“And then?”

“We started with the horses for the Hôtel de Noailles.”

“My friend,” said I, “you lie. We should have met you.”

“No, monsieur, you could not. From the Rue Croix de Petits Champs we saw you arriving. We were in shadow; you did not—” again he coughed and gasped.

“Then you turned back. The rest I know. You intended to take the horses to the Hôtel de Noailles, thinking we were there?”

“Yes.”

“And if we had been?”

“Then, when you came to mount, you would have been dispatched before you knew whether we were grooms or not.”

“You were too late.”

“Yes, we lost time in finding the stable.”

“You have bungled,” said I. “You should not have sought the horses, but attacked us when we came out.”

“It was the heiduque’s plan,” said he, faintly.

"Ah! all's over—petit Baptiste—petite Elisée—they will lack bread—I was to get"—again he seemed stifled.

"What?" said I. "You were to get what?"

"Five hundred louis."

"Rest easy on that score, friend," said I. "Baptiste and Elisée shall have from me five hundred louis each."

"From you? M. le Comte," he gasped, "from you?"

"Yes, yes," said I, "from me. And the wife, I think you mentioned her—I make it fifteen hundred louis for them all."

The fellow held my arm with slipping strength.

"Oh! this is sin that I have done," he groaned, "black sin that ——"

"Come, come," said I, "you have not long to tarry, and I who send you hence unwittingly, would not weigh you down. You obeyed orders—base ones, by my faith!—but you obeyed. Parbleu! a lackey is not born to think. The sin lies at another's door. You lose your life, but in the losing, save your little ones, and like enough yourself, for you repent—a priest can do no more."

His eyes closed, his hand relaxed its hold upon

my arm, his head sagged against the vicomte, but his lips still moved.

“What does he say?” said M. de Noailles.

I bent over him.

“If—I had—served you—M. le Comte—in place of—I had—been a better ——”

The vicomte’s reckoning could no longer be called in question—Paris was less by five. We laid him down, and rising looked each other in the eyes. The vicomte was pale.

“Lannoy,” said he, “what do you say to this?”

“My friend,” said I, “His Eminence the Cardinal Mazarin and Monsieur le Prince de Pajou, being on the eve of their departure from Paris and unable through press of affairs to pay their respects in person at the Hôtel de Noailles, clang us their compliments *pour prendre congé*.”

CHAPTER XVIII

THE COURS LA REINE

WE lost little time in mounting and clattered out into the Rue Croix de Petits Champs as the chimes of St. Eustache rang the hour of four. We had, therefore, none to lose.

"The Écuries Noailles," said I, "remind me of the 'Poulet d'Or.' Now, how are they alike?"

The vicomte laughed.

"At one, you fight for a dinner," said he, "at the other, for a horse."

"Exactly, my friend, and in each case I get it, though of its kind the horse is better than the dinner."

We made our way through the maze of crooked streets between the Louvre and the Tuileries, and coming out on the quai, rode rapidly past the Tuileries garden, past the terraces of the Restaurant Renard, and entered the Cours la Reine. It had grown lighter, the moon had paled, but all was still gray and misty. It was the border-line which marks the shadowy

boundary between night and day—the line where Nature, dashing her dark truncheon, cries daily to an expectant world, “Le Roi est mort! Vive le Roi!” We rode slowly under the trees, but before we had gone far, I pulled up.

“There!” said I, “do you see?”

“Ah!” said he, softly, “the royal carriage!”

Yes, it was the royal carriage, standing in the mist at some distance from us on the Cours, its eight gray stallions holding their heads low as though half asleep, the postillions in the royal livery sitting their saddles as though they too were nodding. The curtains of the coach were drawn tightly, and so it stood,—a strange spectacle!—with guards and equerries to the rear, some mounted, some dismounted, and talking in low tones.

We dismounted, and leading the horses among the trees, fastened them, for they had suddenly become an impediment, so quickly do things change.

“We shall be seen from here,” said the vicomte.

“No, I hardly think so. It is too dark here as yet under the trees. Ah! my friend, you are right. Here comes some one.”

The rustling and the footsteps sounded more distinctly, and we saw a man approaching, stopping from time to time to peer about. He raised his glove and rubbed his nose.

"Corbleu!" said I, laughing, "it is M. le Duc."

"Why! so it is," said the vicomte, "though I hardly know him in his present trappings. He's a desperado, and a bold one. Shall we surprise him?"

At the word, we stepped behind a tree. M. le Duc approached us for a short distance and then turned out upon the Cours where we could see him plainly. Four immense black plumes floated gracefully from his hat; his large loose sleeves were bound at the wrists by bands of black ribbon and a knot of the same caught his cloak on the left shoulder; his thin legs were cased in breeches buttoned tightly down the sides, with bows of black ribbon at the knees where his light-colored boots turned in wide flaps; his spurs were set high on his heels and his spurstraps fastened with silver buckles; he wore black embroidered gloves and had over his eyes a half-masque of red beneath which his nose loomed portentously, but for the nose, we might have doubted his identity.

"He's a swashbuckler, in truth," said the vicomte, "but see! He is crossing the Cours. We shall have to go after him."

M. le Duc was, in fact, going further from us every moment, but constantly peering about in his endeavor to discover us. We were about to follow him, when I saw a coach and six entering the Cours. It came rapidly, and a glance at the liveries showed me that it was His Eminence's. The royal carriage still stood where we had first seen it—a strange spectacle!—for that closely-curtained carriage contained the King, the Duc d'Anjou, and the Regent, in short the monarchy, which stood thus waiting—patiently apparently—for His Eminence. Years after, this scene came to me again when I had become *premier écuyer* to the king. It was at Versailles. His Majesty was about to visit the King of England at St. Germain, but as we left the Grand Stables, one of the horses bolted, breaking the harness and occasioning delay, and when at last I galloped beside the coach into the Marble Court, I found His Majesty and M. le Grand already at the bottom of the stairs. "Monsieur le Comte," said the king, in a peculiarly gracious tone, "I have *almost* been kept waiting." Then it was that

this scene came to me when he, who was always served with the most perfect punctuality, was compelled to wait His Eminence so long. But that is a thing apart.

"Ah!" said the vicomte, "His Eminence!"

Another carriage followed, containing, as we knew later, the Mademoiselles de Mancini, and then a detachment of the cardinal's musketeers. The curtains of the cardinal's carriage, too, were drawn, and his postillions kept a rapid pace until they neared the royal coach, when they pulled up. Day was breaking, and all could be plainly seen. More carriages appeared upon the Cours, some ten or twelve in all, and for a few moments my whole attention was absorbed in watching them to see if I could distinguish the Montpensier liveries; I saw nothing, however, but court officials of one kind or another.

"She is not here," said M. de Noailles.

"No," said I, "not yet, as far as I can see, but there is one possibility."

"And that is?"

"She may be in the royal carriage."

"True," said he, "it is possible."

"Come," said I, "let us go and learn and likewise wish His Eminence bon voyage."

"Faith!" said he, laughing, "that is a bold stroke. Yes, let us go and wish His Eminence bon voyage."

We made our way along the Cours, passing the court-carriages, the guards and the musketeers, and approached the cardinal's coach, the door of which was open, for Mazarin had descended from it to speak to the regent. We saw him beside her carriage, his foot on the step and his head bent in a listening attitude. The vicomte and I walked to within some dozen paces and waited for him to turn. When he did so, we doffed our hats and saluted him.

"Bon jour, monseigneur," said I.

He started violently, grasping his red robes as though he had been struck with a knife, and then, recovering himself, saluted us with the slightest, stiffest inclination of the head possible, and evidently intended to pass on. But I barred him and gave no sign of stepping aside.

"I trust," said I, "that we have not kept Your Eminence waiting; in truth your message reached us rather late."

"My message, sir? I think the moon to-night has dulled your wit."

"But not my sword, monseigneur."

"A sword which I believe serves ——"

"France Monseigneur le Cardinal."

"*III*, by my faith !"

"Impossible, monseigneur, for in that case its service would equal that of Your Eminence which must always take the precedence," and I saluted the cardinal with a low bow.

He bit his lip with rage.

"M. de Noailles," said he, "I do not envy you your company."

"It is the proof of a superior mind," said the vicomte, "that it rises above envy. That Your Eminence does not envy me my company shows my good taste and yours."

"I am happy to learn," said I, "that Your Eminence lacks envy, for that leaves you but *six* of the seven sins for which to obtain absolution."

"Scélérat!" cried the cardinal, quite beside himself with fury, "what hinders me from having your mouthing strapped?"

"The fact that day has dawned, monseigneur. You play your cards much better in the dark, though now and then you lose a trick through inadvertence."

He was grinding his teeth and trembling with passion, yet surrounded as he was by musketeers, what could he do? He could not move without the regent's order, and he knew it. But now that affairs had gone far enough, I stepped aside, and he passed us, cursing to his coach. We saluted him, exclaiming, "Bon voyage, mon-seigneur!"

I turned toward the royal carriage, but it was already advancing up the Cours. The cardinal's followed, the court-carriages and the musketeers forming the escort. For a moment I stood irresolute, then turning to the vicomte: "She is not here," said I.

"Are you certain?"

"I am positive. She would have come in her own coach."

"I think you are right," said he, "but what can have become of M. le Duc?"

"I cannot imagine save that he has found a new scent and is gathering news so eagerly that he has forgotten us."

"I'll search for him; you return to the horses, or we may be fighting again to gain those precious beasts."

"Agreed," said I. "Find M. le Duc; I'll hold

the horses safe, and then to *déjeuner* one and all, my appetite is like my sword."

The vicomte disappeared among the trees, while I strode along to the horses, looking about also for M. le Duc, for I was by no means certain that the vicomte's chances of meeting him were better than mine. As I walked thus, breathing the fresh morning air with keen relish, a single coach turned in upon the Cours some distance before me. I gave the matter little thought, tightened my saddle-girth, swung up, and prepared to take a turn while waiting for the vicomte. The coach was now coming rapidly, and the sight filled me with surprise and pleasure. "Par-bleu!" said I, "here is game, indeed! The Pajou livery! M. le Prince has snored too long." It was in fact the Prince de Pajou driving post-haste to the rendezvous. Riding out on the Cours, I signaled to the postillions, but the fellows not understanding why I should order them to draw rein, fearing perhaps at my sudden appearance, dreading undoubtedly the anger of the prince, pushed on the more. The coach came at full speed, but I whirled my horse into line, and we went thundering down the Cours.

I dashed up beside the laboring postillion and

took his measure. He was a light fellow. Seizing him by the collar, I yanked him from his saddle, and he kicked his stirrups as he came. I slackened my pace enough to bring me clear of the wheels, dropped him to the ground, and striking my black Amadis sharply with the spur, came up on the other side. Seizing the second postillion by the nape, I served him likewise. The riderless horses were now stretching madly along the Cours, and nothing remained for me to do but to pull up and leave M. le Prince to his fate. He had seen all; his head was at the coach-door, his face beneath his black wig and plumed beaver livid with terror. I reined alongside. "Bon jour, M. le Prince!" I shouted through the horses' clash and clang. His hand that gripped the door shook like a leaf; his lips bled, so hard had he bitten them in fear and rage. "I leave you now," I shouted, "bon voyage!" I heard his shriek and laughed. Then spurring, I rode up and grasped the bridle of a leader, holding with a grip that stiffened every sinew in my body. I called soothingly to the frightened horses, I pulled the leader till his jaw met his breast; the pace slackened—slowly, *mon Dieu!* slowly—and they came to a trot. This they seemed bound to

maintain in spite of all, and my arm quivered. I dropped my stirrups, ran my left arm through Amadis's bridle-reins, seized the leader's mane and sprang on him. Then I yanked his mouth and that of his mate as I fancy they had never been before, and at last pulled them up, blown and snorting, the wheelers likewise coming to a stand. For a few moments I sat saddle exhausted, then dismounting, but still holding the ribbons, I cried to the prince, "Descend, monsieur!" and when I saw his red heels safe on the Cours, I drew a long breath of relief.

The prince tottered; he was a man terrified, enraged, amazed, bewildered, stupefied.

"Monsieur le Prince," said I, "your horses have stout mouths and bite their bits well."

"What!" gasped the prince.

"You drive too fast, Monsieur le Prince, too fast by half, and seek your goal regardless of impediment. Your conscience, like your boy-postillions, is too light, and leaves your devilry to rush and riot like your beasts, without a hand to curb. You stamp the breath of honor with your horses' hoofs. You mangle honesty beneath your chariot-wheels. You drive too fast by half!"

“What—what do you mean?” he cried.

“This,” said I. “I have bitted all your horses.
I propose to bridle you.”

CHAPTER XIX

THE RESTAURANT RENARD

"So!" cried the prince, in mingled fear and fury, "you want to fight me, do you?"

"On the contrary, monsieur, I wish to invite you to breakfast with me."

For a moment his surprise strangled him, and then suddenly he grew very bold.

"Coward!" he hissed, striding toward me and shaking his fist. I gave him a blow across the knuckles that made him yelp like a cur.

"Monsieur le Prince!" I cried, "let us understand one another. If you but stood my height, sank scales with me to the same level and were girt with the same girth, I'd take your windpipe in my fist and choke you to your final gasp at once. If you surpassed me, aye! if you doubled me in all that goes to make a man, my steel would leap to yours and split you like a paper bag. But in a contest where the bays of victory bind my brows before I draw my sword, I will not fight, for at the final thrust they'd wither and be not worth the having. Therefore

you shall breakfast with me—mark the invitation is imperative!—and I will fight you, not with my steel but with my wit, and by my life, I'll cut you deeper than any sword of mine could do whose sting you'd flee by death. I'll render you, Monsieur le Prince, *ridiculous!*"

The prince howled like a madman, and drawing his sword made a run at me. I sprang aside, caught him by the wrist and twisted his arm until he howled with pain. Then plucking the sword from him, I placed the point beneath my heel, broke the blade, and threw the thing away. "Monsieur le Prince," said I, "when a man has reached his second childhood, he should not have so dangerous a toy." The prince, quite mastered by his passion, fell in a fit, still striking with his hands. I saw the two postillions running toward us, and without giving the prince another glance, turned, mounted my horse, drew a pistol from my holster, and waited for the fellows to arrive. They came at last, shouting to one another to make haste, but when they faced me and saw the prince upon the ground, they stopped short with gaping jaws. "Pick up your prince," said I, "and put him in his coach," and I raised the hand that held the pistol and adjusted my hat

carelessly. The knaves, more dead than alive, obeyed, and when they had him in and the door shut, I said, "Mount!" They scrambled up with speed.

"We go," said I, "to the Restaurant Renard, and the first who lifts his horses from a walk receives a bullet in the head,—is it clear?"

Their teeth chattered.

"Oui, oui, monsieur!" they cried.

"The knaves," thought I, "have more sense than their master and are strangely faithful."

We advanced at a walk, in truth a slow one, for the fellows held the ribbons like a vise, seeming to think that at any moment a step too quick would bring their brains crashing to the sun. Whenever they thought I was not looking, they eyed me as though I were some werewolf seeking them with bloody jaws, eyed me indeed with so much idiotic terror plastered like mud upon their faces that I had difficulty to keep from laughing and eased myself by touching the black Amadis lightly with my spurs which made him snort and bound. Thus we marched slowly down the Cours, marched to an *auto-da-fé* where the fires and faggots of ridicule waited the corpse of pomp and pride.

I looked about for the vicomte, and was overjoyed to see him and M. le Duc under the trees. Before I reached them, they rode to meet me. I saw that M. le Duc had removed his red masque and that both he and the vicomte were laughing heartily.

"Lannoy!" cried the vicomte, "in heaven's name, what have you there?"

"A mouse in a trap."

"What! what!" cried M. le Duc.

I joined them.

"Lannoy," said the vicomte, "who is in that coach?"

"A gentleman whom I have invited to breakfast with me."

"And he is?"

"The Prince de Pajou."

"Ho! ho!" cried M. le Duc. "The Prince de Pajou!"

"The Prince de Pajou!" cried the vicomte, amazed.

"Yes," said I. "He breakfasts with me by command. Thus I return his recent compliment," and I gave the vicomte a significant glance.

"Ho! ho!" cried M. le Duc, "where did you find him?"

"Taking an airing on the Cours."

"Wonderful!"

"My dear Duc," said I, "who designed your dress?"

"Oh," said he, "I flatter myself it's most appropriate for the occasion."

"And becomes you admirably—quite so. Do put on your red masque again. You were so grandly fierce in that."

"That went with the moon," said M. le Duc, laughing. "I cannot imagine how I missed you. I searched everywhere."

"You were so formidable," said I, "that we fled in terror, but come, what have you learned?"

"First then," said he, "Mademoiselle ——"

"Is what?" I cried. "Not gone to St. Germain?"

"No. At the Luxembourg."

Had we been on foot, I would have embraced M. le Duc then and there.

"Ah!" said I, "I did not know our language was so sweet. Your four words make the softest music in my ears, for in the last half hour I've battled with a doubt that all my reasoning could not down until your melody was wafted me to

drown it. Monsieur le Duc, if all your gathering gleaned news like this, and all your telling brought an equal joy, humanity would deck your natal day with fêtes and pile a marble mountain o'er your tomb and call you ever-blessed."

And thus we reached the Restaurant Renard. It was a great place in its day, a day that antedated the cafés and the coffee which came to us with the ambassadors of the Grand Seigneur. Good cheer was never lacking at two pistoles the plate, and M. Renard was in favor with all the nobility. If you would see or be seen, know who came or went, what was said or done, who had or had not, in short if you would press the pulse of Paris, you went to the Restaurant Renard and placed your finger on it there.

The coach stopped, and we dismounted, turning our horses over to the lackeys who stood for the purpose. M. Renard came running. He was a prosperous bourgeois, healthy, high-colored, thick-necked, short-legged, with a closely-shaven face that shook smiles on every side and a broad back eminent in bows. "We wish," said I, "a breakfast and the best you have." M. Renard scattered orders as a sower scatters grain and made his servants fly. I saw a group of men

upon the second terrace seated about the tables. "A chair!" I cried, "a chair!" And when it came, we bundled M. le Prince into it, quite choked with wrath, and I closed the door. We advanced to the terrace. It was a glorious morning for *déjeuner* in the open air, and the joy of anticipation brightened all things. From the terrace one looked up the Cours in one direction and saw in another the chestnut trees that banked the Tuileries garden; in front an open square stretched to the Champs Élysées and behind flowed the bright Seine crossed by the bridge that led to the Faubourg. M. le Duc, walking arm in arm with the vicomte, appeared enchanted; I followed preceding the chair, which carried by lackeys, advanced imposingly. We recognized the Prince de Choiseul d'Aillecourt, the Baron Pincepré de Buire, the Marquis Achard de Bonvouloir, the Comte de Talbert de Nancray with others whom I did not know. Thus in procession we made the round of the tables to our own, and I cried loudly, "Place! place! messieurs, for the very puissant, the very pompous, the Prince de Pajouette!"

"Ho! ho!" roared M. le Duc, "the Prince de Pajouette!"

"Ha! ha!" roared the Prince de Choiseul d'Aillecourt, "Pajouette!"

And thus in the merriest manner possible we reached our table, and I motioned to the lackeys to set down the chair and open the door. The prince sprang out like a whirlwind, losing his plumed beaver in the performance.

"You shall pay for this!" he sputtered. "You shall pay for this!"

"For what? monsieur," said I, bowing, "the breakfast? Of course, I expect to pay."

"The breakfast be damned!" cried the prince, foaming.

"Zounds! monsieur," cried M. le Duc, "one cannot damn a breakfast till one has tasted it, or otherwise one's judgment may be at fault."

"Unless," said I, "one possesses the judgment of Pajouette which, being always at fault, can never find itself surprised and so can safely damn a breakfast untasted and untried."

"Villain!" howled the prince, "base-born lout! miserable, contemptible, tongue-wagging fop! I——"

"Gentlemen," I cried, "lose not a word! You are present at the inception of a great work—*Autobiography of Pajouette, Peer of France.*

For sale soon on the Pont Neuf, five francs the tome."

"Too little, by my faith," cried the vicomte, "the price should be ten crowns."

"Oh, no!" said I, "a small price for a small man. What would you have? It is to be a clever work, though, eh, Pajouette? Beautifully arranged. Chapter I., Characteristics of Pajouette, you have already heard. What easy flowing style! what graceful touch! what delicate shadings of meaning! Chapter II., Idiosyncrasies of Pajouette; a long chapter this, a very humorous one. Chapter III., Hallucinations of Pajouette; likewise long and mighty marvelous. Chapter IV., Wit of Pajouette; a blank page. Chapter V., Sense of Pajouette; ditto. Chapter VI., Pajouette's Opinion of Himself; a very full chapter this, swelling the volume like a bloated bladder and leaving no place for Honor of Pajouette, or Truth of Pajouette, which are lost sight of, or swamped in an appendix. In truth a mighty work, a masterpiece, don't fail, messieurs, to get a copy."

"Ho! ho!" cried M. le Duc, "if it has all that, it will indeed be worth the having. But who will publish it? The censor will not let it pass."

"Why not?" said the vicomte.

"He'll blush to have the world know France holds such a fool."

"My dear Duc," said I, "what all the world already knows cannot be hid, besides the book is to be written in a charming style, full of words without wit and doings without deeds, in short a wonder of rascality and pomposity. The censor does not live who would have the heart to cut us off from it."

"You trick me, do you?" roared the prince.
"By G—d! I'll have a *lettre de cachet* ——"

"And put yourself in the Bastille while you write?" said I. "Excellent idea. A charming place the Bastille for literary labor; perfect quiet and seclusion; no clash of people or of principles. You'd find the walls attentive listeners, all ears, and at the end of every line they'd punctuate you with applause."

Amid the laughter that rang on all sides, I pushed the prince into a chair, and we began the breakfast, the vicomte, M. le Duc, and I with zest, while the prince dashed everything from him, pounded the table madly and cursed extravagantly.

"Gentlemen," said I, "Pajouette is anxious to

begin our contest and chides me for my long delay. M. le Duc, you shall be judge. Pajouette and I are about to propose to one another a rhyme ——”

“Ho! ho!” cried M. le Duc. “A rhyme!”

“A rhyme,” said I, “and whichever fails to make his rhyme, pays to the other five hundred louis.”

“Excellent!” said the vicomte.

“Come,” cried the bluff Prince de Choiseul d’Aillecourt, “sport! sport! gather all!”

They crowded about the table, banking us by a wall of brilliant vests, laughing eyes, mocking mustaches and gay plumes.

“Who begins?” said M. le Duc, twitching his nose joyfully. “Who begins?”

“Pajouette, of course,” said I. “He shall give the first rhyme.” The Prince de Pajou was slumped in his chair, biting his lips and beating the table in helpless fury.

“Knave!” he snorted, “fool! Do you think I’ll wallow in your rhymes? I tell you I——”

“M. le juge,” said I, “what rhyme does Pajouette propose?”

“As near as I can gather,” said M. le Duc, “he challenges you to rhyme knave and fool.”

"Ma foi!" said I, "no easy rhyme, but I accept his challenge; so here goes:

"The Prince de Pajou is a knave;
 In princes that's not rare.
 Fools quit their folly in the grave,
 So all the wise declare;
 But in De Pajou's case is read
 The rock that wrecks the rule,
 For be it said, alive or dead,
 De Pajou plays the fool."

They roared with laughter.

"Alive or dead!" cried the stout Choiseul d'Aillecourt, "ha! ha! not bad!"

"Did you ever hear," said I, "the diverting story of the Dead Who Eat?"

"What! what!" he cried, "preposterous! explain!"

"On the contrary," said I, "quite true. Our friend, Pajouette, has an idea—I grant you that is preposterous. He developes this idea into a theory the most marvelous. The theory is that dead men do not eat; the idea is that he, Pajouette, is dead. Mark, messieurs, the wisdom of Pajouette, for you will admit it is a wise man who knows when he is dead. Pajouette, belly-full of his theory, will not eat. Falcoz, a physician of the first rank, is at his wit's end,

but finally bethinks him of a gentleman, a very hungry gentleman, whom we will call the Vidame de Baudreuille. This gentleman he presents to Pajouette as a dead man who eats. Pajouette is convinced and eats likewise, but after the first spoonful, crammed with his theme, he wrangles much about the precedence he will take in Paradise to which place for some mysterious reason he considers himself duly bound. Upon being informed that he shall in Paradise take precedence of M. de Vieffville des Essars, Pajouette, happy as a child, rattles his fork and makes a very good meal. Such, gentlemen, is the singular story of Pajouette, Peer of France,—dead by the grace of God!”

They roared loud and long, the prince meanwhile furious, confused, cursing, quivering.

“Order! gentlemen,” cried M. le Duc, “order! I wear the ermine, and in my court I’ll have Decorum on a pedestal, veiled to her eyes and girt with garlands. M. le Comte de Lannoy has won victoriously the rhyme proposed to him by M. le Prince de Pajou. It is now the turn of M. le Prince. The rhyme!”

“Gentlemen,” said I, rising, “I propose but a single word for M. le Prince. Here is the word,

monsieur," (and I looked him in the eyes) "rhyme it well. Lusignan!"

"Ho! ho!" cried M. le Duc, "Lusignan!"

The Prince de Pajou sprang from his chair, his black eyes staring wildly.

"Lusignan!" he gasped, "Lusignan!"

The vicomte and I exchanged glances, but the others, seeing nothing but the ludicrous figure he cut, laughed loudly.

"Rhyme it, monsieur! rhyme it!" cried M. le Duc, "or by my faith, I shall decide against you, nodding my head like Jupiter from whom there's no appeal."

The prince sank into his chair and mumbled incoherently.

"Monsieur le Comte," cried M. le Duc, "you have won the five hundred louis. I, de Druillon d'Ormesson, pronounce it."

"Then, gentlemen," said I, "I'll place my prize with fifteen hundred louis of my own and send them to the children and the widow of a certain man who, sent by a base hound to do a black deed in the dark, obeyed with a mistaken zeal and fell the victim of another's fury, repenting at the last."

The prince sprang at me like a wild animal and

buried his fingers in the lace at my throat. I seized him by the wrists and held him, struggling, at arm's length. Then grasping both his wrists in one hand, I raised a wine-glass. "Gentlemen," said I, "the health of Pajouette!" They drank it laughing. The prince tried to bite me, but I squeezed him till he howled and chucking him under the chin, sang lightly :

" Oh ! sweetly puff the praise of Pajouette,
The children's pretty pet,
The harmless Pajouette,
The Marquis Marmelade de Marmousette,
Prince Pierrot-Poupée de Pajouette."

The others took it up, and while Renard's terrace rang with the song, I flung the prince into a chair, and locking arms with the vicomte and M. le Duc, sought the horses, mounted and galloped away.

CHAPTER XX

PARIS PERTURBED

THE news of the departure had spread, and Paris, shaken and surprised, sprang to arms to face it knew not what. On the St. Honoré they were stretching chains and building barricades, with strange howlings. The city gates, grinding on their iron hinges, clanked ominously to those within and those without, "Stay!" On the Rue St. Florentin we passed a monk of St. Lazarus, who eyed us from his cowl, girt his frock about him and hastened on.

"Did you see that fellow?" said M. le Duc.

"The monk?" said M. de Noailles. "I never notice fellows of their cut."

"No more monk than I," said M. le Duc. "It was the chancellor. I should know him anywhere. He goes to join the court."

"Good riddance!" said I.

"Ah!" said the vicomte, "here comes one of another color. Sprightly by my faith!"

It was a Gray Sister who drew aside for fear

of our horses and looked up at us with a frightened glance.

"Did you see her?" said the vicomte, as we rode on. "Do you know who she is?"

"Who?" said M. le Duc.

"Madame de Brienne."

"Pardieu!" he cried, "we shall meet next the devil himself in disguise, hastening to join the court."

"No fear," said I. "The devil is already with them, red robes and all."

They both laughed. We neared the Rue St. Roch. Here the crowd was dense, and the shouts, "Down with Mazarin!" "Vive Retz!" denser.

The rabble crowded about us.

"You shall not leave!" cried one.

"No!" cried another, "you shall not go to help them starve us out."

"No!" cried a third, "we'll split you first."

"My friends," said I, "we do not wish to go, but as for starving you—what noisy nonsense is it that you give us now?"

"No nonsense!" shouted one, "the orders have been given."

"What! what!" cried M. le Duc.

"Yes, yes," cried one, "to-day no wine, no

beef, no bread! All peasants are forbid to bring us anything."

"The red fox grits his teeth," cried another, "Dame! if we had the fox!"

"Come, come," said I, "the Parliament——"

"Nothing!" cried another, "the Parliament can do nothing."

"No!" cried the third, "the Parliament is told to pack, and quickly too, off to Montargis."

"Yes," cried a fourth, "if they go out by one gate, the king comes in at the other and with him beef and bread, and not before. No! not before! Zounds! if we had the fox!"

"What then?" said I. "What if you had the fox?"

"Skin him!" they cried, "skin him alive and sun his guts!"

"Well said," I cried, "but first he must be caught, until that time—Vive Broussel!"

"Yes, yes," they roared, "Vive Broussel! Pass on, messieurs! pass on!"

We advanced at a sharp trot and near the Palais Royal met a horseman galloping. His handsome dress showed signs that he had ridden hard and far. The vicomte recognized him and called to him, "M. de Fiesque!"

He drew rein and rode among us. He was a well-built man of thirty, or thereabout, with much light hair, expressive eyes and a mustache, small but atoning in dash for its size.

"M. de Fiesque," said the vicomte, "what have you in your saddle-bags that drives you like a whirlwind?"

"Where is M. le Duc d'Orléans?"

The vicomte laughed.

"Who knows? At St. Cloud possibly, flying falcons. What can you want of him? He is never in a hurry. Surely it is not for him you've flecked your horse with foam?"

"Ah! but it is," cried M. de Fiesque, "and I must see him too. The royal army marches on Orleans."

"Ho! ho!" cried M. le Duc, "upon Orleans!"

"You are misinformed," said M. de Noailles. "The royal army, what there is of it, marches on St. Germain, not on Orleans, and all these good Parisians make as loud a howl because the king goes to country palace as though the world were by the ears and heard the final trump."

"You are some years behind events," said he. "Turenne has joined the Mazarin and marches on Orleans."

"Ho! ho!" cried M. le Duc, "Turenne!"

"Turenne, I tell you, and the army of Turenne, become the royal army, or the army of the Mazarin, or whatever it may please God to dub it. It marches on Orleans with a flamboyant van, and if the cardinal gains Orleans, what then?"

"And who can save Orleans?" said the vicomte.

"Who but its suzerain, M. le Duc d'Orléans, lieutenant-general of the kingdom."

"How?"

"How?" cried M. de Fiesque. "By going to command in person in his city of Orleans. The province loathes its governor, the Marquis de Sourdis, but with Monsieur at their head, they'll fling a proud pronunciamiento in the cardinal's teeth and fight the fiery Fronde to a sure finish."

"And what magician from the deep mysterious East are you," I cried, "who can juggle into the slow veins of M. le Duc d'Orléans the bold blood of the mighty Henri IV. when Nature tricked the sire who begot him? Go seek your great *Henricus redivivus*, your resonant rallying-point for all who shake the steel at Mazarin, and tell him your fine plan. He'll laugh and take you to St. Cloud

to see the play, or interrupt your burning eloquence to feed his bitches cracknels."

The Comte de Fiesque looked crestfallen.

"You think he'll not go?" said he. "But Orleans must be saved. If not he, who?"

"I cannot tell," I answered, "but I know one who'd gird upon her side the sword of Henri IV., and place his plume of Ivry in her crest and go—a second Jeanne d'Arc—to relieve Orleans, if God so willed."

"Aye!" cried the vicomte, "she would do it."

"Who?" cried M. de Fiesque.

"Our great Montpensier—Mademoiselle!"

"Oh! if she would!" he cried, "if she but would!"

"Gentlemen," I cried, "set spurs and follow me—where love and duty drive me—to the Palace Luxembourg!"

CHAPTER XXI

AT THE PALACE LUXEMBOURG

WE rode through the narrow streets between the Tuileries and the Louvre and reaching the quai, crossed the bridge and advanced at a brisk pace up the Rue de Seine. M. le Duc and I formed the van, the Comte de Fiesque and the Vicomte following. On all sides we encountered the same confusion; men running about armed with whatever came to hand and shouting, "A bas le Mazarin!"; women crying from doorways and balconies, "Stop them! stop them! They go to join the fox." We were blocked more than once, but by throwing money among the rabble and scattering a "Vive Broussel!" or a "Vive Retz!" judiciously, we made our way. M. le Duc seemed overjoyed at all the commotion, shaking his four black plumes defiantly and thrusting his nose to left and to right, as though he feared, amid the hubbub, some precious bit of news might flout him unperceived. When for the third time we were blocked on the Rue de Tournon, he rode among them.

"Corbleu!" he cried, "shake us space there for our horses' haunches!"

"No! no!" they shouted, "you shall not pass. You go to join the court. You think to feast and grow fat while we starve."

"Hold! hold!" cried a fishwife, pushing and puffing her way to M. le Duc's horse. "What have we here?"

She was a brazen, buxom, blowsy creature, red of jowl and wide of waist, with arms like a farrier's, her vixen hide sweating coarseness.

"Ha!" she cried, "a spindle-shanks! a plumed bandy-legs! and his tribe—gluttons all! If they can stuff their chops, they care not how we grunt in our empty bellies."

"A woman of excellent sense," said M. le Duc, saluting her merrily. "A reasoner. What is your name, ma belle?"

"Bigaut!" she cried, extending her lower jaw, "Bigaut la grosse!"

"Hé! hé!" said M. le Duc, "Bigaut la grosse! My friends, cry us good riddance, for, when we're gone, Paris will have four less to feed. Bigaut la grosse can eat our share. She's big enough!"

The rabble laughed and made way for us, and

we galloped without further opposition up the Rue de Tournon.

"M. le Duc is a marvel, is he not, messieurs?" said I.

"If he keeps the same pace," said M. de Fiesque, "he'll unhorse Beaufort and become the idol of the mob."

"A few more sallies such as this," said the vicomte, "and our good canaille will quite forget 'no wine, no bread, no beef,' for every fellow will be crammed with wit, too full to eat or utter."

"Messieurs," said M. le Duc, plainly pleased, "you make too much of it. It is a trifle."

"But trifles such as this," said I, "when well tongue-twisted set all the court agog and fling a duc, with duchesses, a footing like a king."

The Rue de Tournon is not long, and, therefore, we soon rode through the gates of the Luxembourg. As I passed the portals, I felt strangely dizzy and sat a moment before dismounting, hardly realizing where I was. It was all a strange, strange dream. Should I see her again? What was all this about me? If only this nightmare, these guards and pomps and palaces, these mobs and ministers, this regent,

king, and cardinal—oh! if they would all vanish, vanish, vanish! and in the wide wide world leave but my Mademoiselle and me and my proud Château of Lannoy where side by side we'd wander hand in hand, no flashing *fleur-de-lis* to mock me, no ceremonial popinjays to read me rules and precedence—ah!—bah! I sprang to the ground, stamping my spurred heels, and a moment later went up the grand staircase, arm in arm with M. le Duc, and laughing lightly. We passed the antechamber, brilliant with many-colored marbles and silver lustres, filled with valets, hautboys, porte-manteaux, huissiers, guards, porte-arquebuses, and went to wait for audience in the gallery. Above me on the gilded ceiling, Mars rode in his triumphal car, and Hercules, girt with his lion's hide, supported Victory, while heroes marched to war. The four angles of the frieze flashed trophies carved and gilded. Over the four doors and the two cabinets of marqueterie, six of Titian's portraits surveyed me. The tabourets, the portieres, the screens were all of crimson velvet fringed with gold, while the chimneypieces at either end of the gallery were ornamented with white marble bas-reliefs, the one representing Diana surrounded by her nymphs, the other

Diana and Actæon. I stood looking at him and his budding antlers and at the goddess, crescent-crowned and flushing rosy through her marble veins, defiant and more fair. "Faith!" I thought, "Actæon was a fool—as I am."

"Look at Monsieur le Comte de Lannoy," said M. le Duc, "he stands entranced before Diana. Take care, monsieur! She'll branch you like Actæon and bay you with her hounds."

I was aware again that they were there and turned to them.

"I fancy not, M. le Duc," said I, laughing. "Diana finds no fault with me. My eyes are on her star."

The huissier, who had gone to announce us, came across the polished floor.

"Monsieur le Comte," said he to M. de Fiesque, "Monsieur will see you."

"Is Monsieur at the Luxembourg?" cried M. de Fiesque, joyfully.

"He came this morning, M. le Comte."

"Good," said M. de Fiesque. "M. de Lannoy 'twas fortunate I met you, more fortunate I followed you. Come, gentlemen, I shall I fear need all your backing for the work in hand. Toss me from time to time your tongues, prompt and per-

suasive, and thus, so surely seconded, I'll muster Monsieur at Orleans."

We entered the cabinet, M. de Fiesque first, I second, M. le Duc and the Vicomte together, the huissier announcing us. A glance showed me that our audience was with M. le Duc d'Orléans alone. He was seated—a miracle of finery, as I have said before—his light locks curled and perfumed, twisting his mustache with two white fingers and occasionally tapping his laced boots with his walking-stick. He returned our salutations in an offhand manner and then with a bored expression waited for us to begin.

"Monsieur," said M. de Fiesque, bowing a second time, "I have ridden fast to find you to bring you a message from Orleans."

"Oh, dear!" said Monsieur. "Well, what do they want?"

"Turenne, Monsieur, has joined himself to Mazarin. Turenne is marching on Orleans."

"Is he indeed? Well, what if he is? M. de Turenne's gadabouts are no affairs of mine. Somebody is always marching somewhere; as well he as another, I suppose."

"But, Monsieur," cried M. de Fiesque, "you are the suzerain of Orleans. You ——"

"What of it?"

"If M. de Turenne gains Orleans, he gains it for the cardinal."

"Does he? It will not be the first city he has gained. Why come to me with it? I'll read it soon enough."

"Because, Monsieur, you can prevent it."

"How, pray?"

"By granting the prayer of your faithful people in Orleans, Monsieur, and placing yourself at their head. They will resist the royal army to a man."

"That they can do if they please without me. I don't relish the journey."

"No journey jolts too roughly when glory wings the way, Monsieur," said I. "For you, their suzerain, the Orleannais will do and dare, laughing the odds to scorn."

"All this is very perplexing and uninteresting," said Monsieur, wearily. "I'll tell you something much more to the point. My Folle has had a litter. I bet a hundred crowns with M. de Vil-loutreux de Faye there would be six or more, and there are nine. Ha! ha! there're nine. They'll be the finest hunting-dogs in France, mark that."

I shrugged my shoulders,

"Monsieur," said I, "you labor under the delusion that you have granted an interview to the keeper of your kennels. I beg to remind you that we are discussing Orleans."

He flushed and rose angrily.

"Orleans! Orleans!" said he, hotly, "those people have no business to bother me with their affairs."

"But, Monsieur," said M. de Fiesque, "their situation is desperate. They dare not stand against the cardinal without you, but with you——"

"I tell you I'll not go," cried Monsieur. "No! I'll not go." M. de Fiesque threw himself on his knees.

"Oh! don't say that, Monsieur," he cried, "consider how——"

"Peste! No!"

"Then Orleans is lost!" cried M. de Fiesque, mournfully.

"Orleans is lost, Monsieur le Comte de Fiesque?"

The voice thrilled me through and through and made my pulses pound. It was Mademoiselle, entering without our having perceived her, so intent were we with Monsieur, and now sweeping

forward, her dark hair clustering about her noble head, her crimson train glittering in her wake. The Comte de Fiesque sprang from his knees, and we four bent our heads, while Monsieur stood fretting. She saluted us all with one splendid salutation that gave to each its single glance and yet to all was equal.

"And who has lost Orleans?" said Mademoiselle.

It was a question no one rushed to answer.

"Oh! I suppose I have," said Monsieur, pettishly, wiping his lips with his lace handkerchief. "I am harassed on all sides. The regent wants me at St. Germain, these gentlemen want me at Orleans, my falconers want me at St. Cloud. *À la bonne heure!* I'll go to none of them. I'll stay where I am in Paris."

"Monsieur, mon père," said Mademoiselle, "you are quite right in keeping clear of St. Germain, but why they want you at Orleans, or how Orleans is lost without you, I do not understand."

"Mazarin," said I, "Mazarin, cased in the cuirass of Turenne, marches on Orleans!"

"What!" cried Mademoiselle.

"Oh! it is most true, Mademoiselle," said M. de Fiesque. "I come to pray Monsieur to hasten

to the succor of the people of Orleans who cry to him for aid, declaring that if he will deign to visit his good city, they'll rally round him royally and fence Orleans with twice ten thousand hearts of bronze."

"You hear, mon père!" cried Mademoiselle, with flashing eyes, "you hear!"

"Oh, dear!" said Monsieur, "this business is most inopportune. I cannot see why the people of Orleans should disarrange my plans with these ——"

"You *hesitate*, mon père?" cried Mademoiselle.

Monsieur was nettled and irritable as he always was when any question of importance demanded his decision.

"You are going to persecute, too, are you?" said he, peevishly. "Every one persecutes me and tries to turn me from my quiet life. I envy those who never hear of politics."

"You wrong your friends, Monsieur," said M. de Fiesque. "They are strange persecutors who would carve for you upon a time-defying tablet — 'On such and such a day, Orleans was saved by Monsieur.'"

"Monsieur," cried M. de Noailles, "in such a

case what would your father Henri IV. have done?"

"Oh!" said Monsieur, sighing, "Henri IV. enjoyed bad roads, rough riding and a fracas. I do not. Tastes differ. He consulted his; I shall consult mine."

"Then I must tell the people of Orleans that Monsieur abandons them?" said M. de Fiesque.

"Parbleu!" cried Monsieur, in vexation. "Tell them what you please. Oh! it is plain enough whatever comes they want to place the blame on me. They have no right to bother me, I tell you. If I choose to employ myself more pleasantly than splashing about in muddy roads and sleeping in my traveling-coach or in all sorts of beds, whose business is it, eh? You may all pack off about your affairs and leave me to mine."

And Monsieur sat down, pulling his mustache fretfully. I looked at Mademoiselle. She stood proudly, but her eyes were full of tears, tears of humiliation at Monsieur's pusillanimity. She raised her handkerchief for an instant, and then, her pride burning her tears, she faced M. de Fiesque.

"M. de Fiesque," said she, "Monsieur has lost Orleans, but Mademoiselle will save it!"

"Thank God!" he cried.

"What!" said Monsieur.

"Yes, mon père, with your permission I will go to save Orleans."

"Oh, I quite agree to that," said Monsieur, delighted to emancipate himself from a disagreeable responsibility. "You may go as soon as you please. I'll give you a lieutenant and an escort from my guards."

"And these gentlemen?" said Mademoiselle, smiling.

"These gentlemen," I cried, "will bear you company, their mettle blazing like their swords, and with you in their midst, they'll unbolt bravery and fling a front so resolute that, seen afar, 'twill rout Turenne!"

CHAPTER XXII

THE BIRTH OF A SONG

WE left the Luxembourg. Mademoiselle had declared that she would set out at four in the afternoon, taking with her the Comtesses de Frontenac and de Fiesque. She bade us be in attendance at the hour, and we departed to complete our preparations. At the quai, we said *au revoir* to the Comte de Fiesque and M. le Duc, and hastened to the Hôtel de Noailles where we dined and gave the necessary orders for departure. Then the vicomte left me to pay a final visit to the Hôtel-de-Ville and learn the disposition of the Prince de Conti and his adherents whom Madame de Longueville had gathered there, for he felt in leaving Paris he must know on what we could rely. It was settled that I should join him at the Luxembourg. I, meanwhile, was to find the Prince de Choiseul d'Aillecourt and spare no pains to induce him to join us, for his adherence was of value. It was a strong step that we were taking, and although we took

it with cheerful, aye! with joyful hearts, we knew well that once taken, there was no turning back, for, as matters stood, in flinging the gage to Mazarin we flung it to the king. Not that that weighed with us for an instant, but when one takes a step, it is well to take it surely. I ordered Bazille to meet me with my horses at the Luxembourg and set out on foot for the hôtel of the Prince de Choiseul d'Aillecourt in the Faubourg St. Germain, for Paris was still in turmoil, and after the experiences of the morning, I fancied I should go better on foot, and I had time enough. I wished, moreover, to see the prince as quietly as possible. Therefore I set out, crossing the Tuileries garden rapidly and coming out upon the quai. I encountered no obstacle of any kind, and when I reached the bridge near Renard's terraces, was fully satisfied with the course adopted. I was about to cross the Seine when I heard my name pronounced with much emphasis. Turning, I saw M. le Prince de Pajou advancing toward me. For a moment surprise overcame every other feeling, and then I laughed for I had entirely forgotten him. His manner mystified me. He was smiling cordially and appeared in the best possible humor. I took no step forward

but allowed him to come to me. "Now," thought I, "what is this?" The prince arrived and saluted me very graciously, and I lifted my hat gravely in response.

"Monsieur le Comte," said he, "I stand your debtor to the amount of five hundred louis, and I desire to discharge the debt."

"You have a good memory, M. le Prince," I answered, coldly.

"But not so good a wit, eh? Well, let it pass. Perhaps I've wronged you somewhat, monsieur. I dare say, I dare say. Well, let it pass. We must not be at odds, monsieur. Neighbors, you know; neighbors. And I for one am quite ready to say, pardon me."

"For what? Monsieur le Prince."

"For what? Why—well, for all that's passed. Will you accept these five hundred louis?"

He held out a purse. I took it.

"I accept," said I, "what I have won. I shall use them in the way I mentioned."

He knit his brows for an instant and then beamed.

"And do you also accept my apology?" said he.

I confess that I was puzzled.

"Monsieur le Prince de Pajou," said I, "there are things which are not capped by an apology, but if your heart is sincere—well, I forgive you."

"We shall be the best of friends," he cried. "Good enemies, you know, make good friends at times. The one we have been and ——"

"Monsieur le Prince," said I, "I trust I'm no man's enemy. I do not ride with rancor in my breast against my kind. Those who attack me do so at their peril, but I? I draw my sword to split a sham, to lunge a lie, and to defy deceit, and when a man is cloaked in these, that man pollutes the air I breathe if he be near me. He must make way for me, and if he will not, stand and face the fray. The man himself I do not hate. Strip him of all his base habiliments, my hand ungloved shall seek his grasp. Let him retain them, and as I live, I'll war him to the death!"

"You see, monsieur, that I'm without a cloak," said the prince, laughing.

"So I perceive."

"Come, my dear comte," said he in the most amiable manner, "let us seal the compact with a bottle of Renard's best wine. Allons! you know his wines are excellent," and he drew his arm through mine.

I was young then. We learn as we grow older.

"Ma foi!" said I, laughing, "to humor you I will, but my time is brief."

He appeared overjoyed, and thus we passed along the terrace in the most agreeable manner and entered the Restaurant Renard.

"Follow me," said the prince, "we shall have better service."

We entered a large apartment having numerous tables covered with bottles and glasses and surrounded by men, some fifty in all, drinking boisterously.

"Zounds!" thought I, "Renard has a full house to-day."

Before I had advanced six paces, the door was swung to behind me, and at the same instant the Prince de Pajou, gliding among the tables and putting a score of sword-hilts between himself and me, cried mockingly, "Gentlemen, here is M. le Comte de Lannoy!" They stared in various stages of intoxication. I recognized de Montjoye-Vaufrey, de Levis-Mirepoix, de Clermont d'Avranville. A glance told all, to say nothing of the knots of green ribbon on their shoulders. It was a trap. I was among the Mazarins!

I looked for the Prince de Pajou. He had prudently placed himself in the furthest corner of the room, but I saw his face, distorted with hate and glowing with triumph, grinning at me under his high peruke. "Fool! fool! fool!" I hissed through my teeth, "fool that I am! It serves me right."

"Ha! ha!" roared de Levis-Mirepoix, who was very drunk. "Welcome, M. le Comte, you come in good season."

"It is pleasant to get a good greeting," said I, "but I fail to see that my arrival is timely."

"No?" said he. "You will though. We're about to drink a toast— Damnation to the Fronde and Long Life to His Eminence!—and you're in time for that. Am I plain?"

"Nothing is plainer than you," I answered, for in truth he had a hideous, blotched face with a wart on his nose.

"Ha! ha! ha!" they roared. "De Levis-Mirepoix, that's good! Nothing is plainer than you. Ha! ha! ha!"

"Gentlemen," said I, "cast no aspersions upon the beauty of M. de Levis-Mirepoix. He is Antinous, and like Antinous, he drowns himself—in wine."

"Bon! bon!" they bawled. "Antinous! By G—d! Antinous. Ha! ha!"

"Come," said de Levis-Mirepoix, grown sulky, "less spewing of rotten wit. The toast—Long Life to His Eminence!—and any man who fails to drain it, is a damned Frondeur, ready for ripping. Am I plain now?"

"Quite," said I.

He shoved me a full glass, and they crowded about.

"Drink!" he cried, staggering. "Long Life to His Eminence!"

They raised their glasses, but their eyes were on me. I lifted the glass to my lips and filled my mouth, then spitting it out suddenly, "Faugh!" I cried, "I can't drink this stuff." Twenty swords leaped from their scabbards at the word.

"Ha!" bellowed de Levis-Mirepoix like a bull, "that's your game is it? You spit out the health of His Eminence. We'll widen your gullet with our swords and pour it down. Am I plain now?"

"M. de Levis-Mirepoix," said I, "your wine is wretched. Your quarrel is with Renard not with me. You do His Eminence no honor by drinking him in such stuff. Fetch me some *vouvray*. I'll give you a toast myself."

"You'll give a toast?" cried de Clermont d'Avranville, swaying across the table. "What in hell will *you* give?"

"No matter," said I, in fact I did not know myself. "I'll give you a toast—and more, I'll sing you a toast in rhyme."

"Ah!" they cried, mollified, "a toast in rhyme! Get the *vouvray*."

While it was coming, I sat racking my wits, my foot tapping on the floor. First came the air, swinging clearer and clearer, and then the words, tramping to the time, and at last my brain was pregnant, my song, a lusty unborn babe, leaping within me, and I sprang to my feet, master of myself and of them all.

"The rhyme!" cried de Clermont d'Avranville, passing me the *vouvray*, "The rhyme!"

"The rhyme!" they roared, waving their glasses, "The rhyme!"

I leaped on a chair and surveyed them—a glittering array of brilliant coats, belts, boots and plumes. Some held their swords still drawn, and on all sides the hard coarse faces, bloated by drink or sunken by debauchery, glared at me like tigers sniffing blood. In the far corner I saw the Prince de Pajou, pale as ever, his black eyes

winking wickedly, and bowing to them all, I
raised my glass and sang:

"Fill up! messieurs. I give you now
A toast fit for the king.
Limoux, Lorraine, Bourgogne, Moselle
Shall each its tribute bring.
Ah! how they speak and sparkle as
Their colors call our glance!
Up! up! messieurs. My toast! my toast!
The glorious wines of France!

*"We'll drink from Beauvais to Bordeaux, tarum! tarum!
tara!
From Neufchâtel to Neufchâteau, tarum! tarum! tara!
We'll kiss the lass that brings the glass
And reeling roar—huzza!
From Fontenay to Fontainebleau we'll drink, tarum! tara!*

"Behold the brave le Beaujolais,
Warm-hearted, honest wine,
Likewise Monsieur le Mâconnais,
A stout son of the vine.
There are sweet wines in Rancio
And wines in Jurançon,
But better far Touraine's Bourgeuil
And raspberry Chinon.

*"We'll drink from Beauvais to Bordeaux, tarum! tarum!
tara!
From Neufchâtel to Neufchâteau, tarum! tarum! tara!
We'll kiss the lass that brings the glass
And reeling roar—huzza!
From Fontenay to Fontainebleau we'll drink, tarum! tara!*

"And thou, triumphant Bordelais,
 For thy wine-vaults I yearn;
 Château-Larose, Château-Margaux,
 And heaven-sent Sauterne.
 Hail to the rich red wines of Pange
 Whose juices never jar,
 And to the wine the cardinals love,
 The holy wine of Bar!"

I had them, I had them! I saw it, and spring-
 ing on a table, I shouted, "With me, messieurs!
 With me!" The rafters shook as we sang:

*"We'll drink from Beauvais to Bordeaux, tarum! tarum!
 tara!*

From Neufchâteau to Neufchâteau, tarum! tarum! tara!

We'll kiss the lass that brings the glass

And reeling roar—huzza!

From Fontenay to Fontainebleau we'll drink, tarum! tara!"

They crowded about the table now, dancing
 with delight, and I gave them the next:

"Lo! here's a sparkling golden wine,
 Châtillon's sturdy son;
 A boisterous, bounding, bouncing boy,
 He wins when he is won.
 They love him well upon the Marne,
 We love him, too, amain.
 His nurse is noise, his life is love,
 The rollicking Champagne!"

Again I cried, "With me! with me, mes-
 sieurs!" Zounds! how they roared!

*" We'll drink from Beauvais to Bordeaux, tarum ! tarum !
tara !*

From Neufchâtel to Neufchâteau, tarum ! tarum ! tara !

We'll kiss the lass that brings the glass

And reeling roar—hussa !

From Fontenay to Fontainebleau we'll drink, tarum ! tara ! "

" Drain to the dregs ! " I cried. They did so.

" And now, " I shouted, " every man upon his feet and with a full glass ! " And when they were thus, I sang :

" With stately stride the sovereign comes —

Begin ! begin the dance !

He leads his lady by the hand,

His love, his la belle France.

Hats off ! hats off ! messieurs, I pray ;

Hats off and bend the knee !

His Majesty the King of Wines,

The crimson Burgundy ! "

Zounds ! how they roared !

*" We'll drink from Beauvais to Bordeaux, tarum ! tarum !
tara !*

From Neufchâtel to Neufchâteau, tarum ! tarum ! tara ! .

We'll kiss the lass that brings the glass

And reeling roar—huzza !

From Fontenay to Fontainebleau we'll drink, tarum ! tara !

" Ye wines of France, diversified,

Of exquisite bouquet,

Your perfume like the poet's song

Can steal my soul away.

I love you well, good comrades, you
Enrapture and entrance.
Then hear my vow—I'll drink till death
The glorious wines of France ! ”

My travail was ended; the song was born. And while they clanged the chorus, beating each other on the backs and bellowing like mad, I stepped quickly from the table to a chair and to the door, flinging it open. I caught a swift glimpse of the Prince de Pajou, shrunk in the far corner, devoured by disappointment. “Adieu, messieurs,” said I, bowing, “I—” but the rest was lost in the devilish din as waving their swords, stumbling over chairs, throwing their arms round one another's necks and capering about the tables, they howled in drunken delight:

“We'll kiss the lass that brings the glass
And reeling roar—huzza ! ”

And thus I left them, passing swiftly along the terrace, but even as I crossed the Seine, I heard the shout, dimmed by the distance but still distinct:

“We'll drink from Beauvais to Bordeaux, tarum! tarum!
tara ! ”

CHAPTER XXIII

THE ROAD TO ORLEANS

AT four o'clock I reached the Luxembourg in the coach of the Prince de Choiseul d'Aillecourt. The courtyard of the palace was an animated and picturesque sight, filled as it was with Monsieur's guards in their red uniforms, the green and silver porte-arquebuses in line beside the railings, Mademoiselle's traveling-carriage with its six black horses drawn up before the palace-door, lackeys and valets bustling everywhere. I saw that Bazille was on hand with my horses and that the vicomte and M. de Fiesque had already arrived. We lacked only M. le Duc.

"Gentlemen," said I, as we left the coach, "here is M. le Prince de Choiseul d'Aillecourt primed with a *pish* ! for His Eminence."

They laughed.

"Welcome! welcome!" cried the vicomte, embracing the prince. "This is glorious news."

"It didn't take much to bring me," said the big prince, chuckling in his hearty way. "I never miss a meet. Of course, I prefer boars, but

when they're not to be had—why, foxes! foxes!”

“And how do matters stand at the Hôtel-de-Ville?” I inquired.

“The best possible,” said the vicomte. “M. de Longueville and M. de Bouillon have all in hand. M. de Longueville has promised Parliament the aid of Rouen, Dieppe, Caen, in short all Normandy. His duchesse has taken up her residence at the Hôtel-de-Ville, and the people on the Place de Grève are shouting ‘Vive Conti!’ We shall hold Paris.”

“Splendid! Do you know de Levis-Mirepoix has joined the Mazarins?”

“Good riddance! How did you learn that?”

“I have just had a glass of wine with him.”

“What!” cried the vicomte.

But there was no time to explain for we saw Mademoiselle at the palace entrance. She stood in a traveling-dress of gray, braided and corded with gold, and her hat held but a single plume, a long white plume, that floated firmly, beating the reveille of resolution. In an instant I was by her side, presenting my hand. She took it with a smile that lit us all, and thus I escorted her to her carriage, the drums rolling, porte-arquebuses

under arms, and the guards of Monsieur at present. The Comtesses de Frontenac and de Fiesque followed with the Prince and M. de Fiesque, and when she and they had entered, M. de Noailles and I mounted our horses, the Prince de Choiseul d'Aillecourt his coach, the whips cracked, the guards fell in, Mademoiselle threw a kiss to Monsieur, who stood watching from a window and hugging himself that he was out of it all so pleasantly, and thus with a clatter, a clash, and a clang, we were up and away to Orleans.

As we passed the gates, I rode to the vicomte.

"We shall lose M. le Duc," said I.

"A louis on it, he has been running after news," answered he. "We shall have him yet, quite blown."

Indeed before we reached the Rue de Médicis we saw him riding fast, his plumes pricked and his nose to the fore.

"M. le Duc," said I, as he joined us, "you ride at time's tail, your saddle-bags swelled with talk and topics tonguing your horse's hoofs, but you are doubly welcome. I feared we should lose you."

"No fear," said M. le Duc, laughing. "Who are in the first coach?"

"Mademoiselle and the Comtesses."

"And in the second?"

"M. le Prince de Choiseul d'Aillecourt and M. de Fiesque."

"Ho! ho! M. le Prince de Choiseul d'Aillecourt—good!"

"That was my idea," said the vicomte, "and M. de Lannoy's handiwork."

"Excellent! excellent! I'll be with you in a moment when I have paid my respects."

He rode forward, and we saw him bowing beside the door of Mademoiselle's coach.

"My dear Lannoy," said the vicomte, "pray explain about de Levis-Mirepoix."

"What? The glass of wine?"

"Yes. Where were you?"

"At Renard's."

"Renard's! You went there to drink with de Levis-Mirepoix?"

"No," I said, laughing, "I went there to drink with M. le Prince de Pajou."

"Lannoy! What the devil!——"

But M. le Duc joined us, riding in between.

"Have you heard the new pasquinade on M. de Bouillon?" said he.

"What?" said I.

"Oh! good, very good—for the Mazarins.
Here it is:

"The brave M. de Bouillon
Is troubled with the gout;
But as bold as a lion
Is the brave M. de Bouillon.
When he meets a battalion,
He wheels to right about;
The brave M. de Bouillon,
Who is troubled with the gout."

"Faith!" said I, "such stuff as that can't cut
our cause. Are they singing it?"

"Yes. But do you know what they are singing
at the Hôtel-de-Ville? Ha! ha! 'Oh!
sweetly puff the praise of Pajouette.'"

We laughed.

"And that has gone?" said I.

"Everywhere."

"And meanwhile," said the vicomte, "M. le
Comte de Lannoy and M. le Prince de Pajou have
been clinking glasses together at Renard's."

"Heavens! monsieur," cried M. le Duc, "explain!
explain!"

"My dear Duc," said I, "M. le Prince de Pajou
has paid me his five hundred louis, and I have
returned the compliment by singing him a song,
and at present we stand as we stood—on guard!

oh! very much on guard! That's all the explanation I will give you at present," and laughing, I left them both dumfounded and galloped to Mademoiselle's carriage-door—the door that led to heaven—and thus we made our way to Chartres.

The night was spent at Chartres, Mademoiselle and the comtesses stopping at the archevêché, we at the chancellerie, and early the next morning, we were all en route for Toury, following the high-road.

We passed washerwomen, brawny, bare-legged and bare-armed, in water to their knees, soaping and beating linen on boards breast-high, laughing, rinsing and wringing in a running stream, but stopping all to gape at us and at our escort. Again beside the road, I saw four weavers, pale, like all who dwell in darkness, blinking their eyes as the sun caught our trappings, wild-looking beasts with tangled heads and beards, thin-limbed and crooked by the lumbering looms.

And thus we made our way through the pleasant open country, the guards of Monsieur in advance, the coach of Mademoiselle with its six bounding blacks following, the lackeys up be-

hind, the Vicomte, M. le Duc and I beside the doors, the coach of M. le Prince de Choiseul d'Aillecourt next, and in the rear, porte-arquebuses, valets, and the train.

A league from Toury, the lieutenant of the guards stopped three couriers, one of whom carried a letter to Monsieur from the authorities of Orleans. By it Mademoiselle learned that the cardinal and the king had joined Turenne at Cléry, and that in the king's name the authorities had been commanded to open the gates of Orleans to the royal army. No time was to be lost, and we pressed forward, for between the letter's lines we perceived a plain picture of the Orleans authorities sweating perplexity, their knees knocked out of the perpendicular by the king's mandate. At Toury, rumors were rife and doubts dancing; at Artenay, affairs were worse—the townspeople gathering about the carriages, shouting that the king and the cardinal were already in Orleans. The matter seemed so certain that even the burly prince looked black, while M. le Duc, in his endeavor to gather facts, danced like a man on a hot skillet, kicking questions on all sides. And then through the press came M. de Valon, adjutant-general of Monsieur,

who cried bluntly that all was lost, since Orleans had opened its gates. At this the shouts redoubled; the people blocking the carriage and imploring Mademoiselle to abandon a hopeless project which could now have no issue but danger to herself. I see her yet, looking from her coach-window upon the crowd and listening to it all with a serenity that brought color again to the cheek of Madame de Frontenac and brightened the brown eyes of Madame de Fiesque. And when all had said their say, she tossed the head that held her plume and cried a word—a word that damning doubt, tearing timidity and vanquishing vacillation, set us out of Artenay like a hurricane—"Forward!"

Another league, and we came upon the climax in the brilliantly-decked person of the Marquis de Chompré, who hastened to sing the song composed for him by Messieurs de la Ville to the effect that, hearing in the one ear the thunder of the king's commands, and in the other the roar of the suzerain's orders, they were quite deafened by the discord and read themselves rebels at every turn. In despair, they proposed as a happy solution for a most pressing problem that Mademoiselle should delay her advance, and lest

she might be at a loss for a pretext, they very humbly suggested that she feign an indisposition for the time being, otherwise they begged to inform her that they must close their gates against her. In short it was evident that the king's command and the cardinal's menaces had given their wits a furlough. Such was the burden of the song sung by the Marquis de Chompré, standing by Mademoiselle's coach and beating time with his bows. She heard his flats and sharps to the end, and when he had finished, she stepped from her carriage and stood in the bright sun that danced about her and tipped her plume with gold.

"Monsieur le Marquis de Chompré," she cried, drawing herself up and looking down on him as one looks down from the towers of Notre Dame, "how dare you bring me a message like this?"

"But, Mademoiselle, I am ——"

"Lacking, sir, in sense and courage. Go! sir, take my answer to Messieurs de la Ville, and tell them that if they dare to bar their gates against Mademoiselle, Mademoiselle will storm Orleans and show them that it is not to them that the people of Orleans owe obedience, but to me—

the daughter of their master!" Then turning to us, she cried, "To horse! messieurs, and I ride with you."

M. le Duc and M. de Noailles were up at the word, the Prince and M. de Fiesque leaving the coach and mounting likewise. A lackey brought forward her white stallion with his crimson housings, and the first equerry presented himself for duty, but I waved him away and gave her my hand. When she was up, she laughed gaily.

"Ah! that was nicely done, M. le Comte. Ma foi! if I should chance to lose my equerry——"

"You will know where to seek another, Mademoiselle."

"And gain by it, eh? We shall ride hard. À moi, messieurs! En avant!" And she was off, the white stallion shaking his foaming mane.

We struck spurs behind her,—I, M. de Noailles, M. de Fiesque, M. le Duc, M. le Prince de Choiseul d'Aillecourt,—leaving comtesses, coaches, guards, porte-arquebuses and the train to keep what pace they could.

And thus we rode to storm Orleans—a clattering, conquering cavalcade—Mademoiselle the van!

CHAPTER XXIV

MADEMOISELLE STORMS ORLEANS

AT last, high-towering, flung-afar, we saw the walls and moats of Orleans, its three projecting gates, the Porte de Renart, the Porte de Paris and the Porte de la Bannière, bolted, barred and crowned with halberds. Beyond flowed the bright Loire set with its Isles de Charlemagne, de St. Aignan and de St. Loup, and on either hand ran the roads to Chécy and to Blois, white belts girdling the green. Noon was near. We galloped down the highway that stretched before us to the Porte de la Bannière, and reaching the ramparts, rode along beside the moat. It was a sight I shall never forget.

On our right, towered the great gray walls of Orleans, massive, and showing still, stone-stamped, the batterings of the Maid; the battlements brave with casques, plumes, and uniforms of blue or black and red, were crowded with the Orleans soldiery and with the Orleannais, jostling amid pikes and pennons, while the wide waters

of the moat flashed it all again almost beneath our horses' hoofs. And Mademoiselle? She rode slowly beside the moat, erect on her white stallion, one hand grasping her crimson bridle-reins with a grip that made him champ his curbs, the other waving, to the martial array above her, her gold-butted riding-whip, her head up, her eyes on the battlements, and her white plume venting victory. We followed her, as more than twice a hundred years before they who took the Tourelles followed the standard of the Maid. The people and the soldiers recognized her; the casques glittered in a high-hurled frenzy, the pennons shook us a wind-tossed welcome, and the battlements rolled us a mighty roar that, ramping on and on, leaped from the Porte de la Bannière to the Porte de Paris—"Vive Mademoiselle!" Thus, storming Orleans, Mademoiselle swept on, girt by her grandeur and five swords.

We made our way around the walls until we reached the Porte de Bourgogne which is near the river. That, too, was barricaded. We dismounted. I stepped to the edge of the moat and raising my hands beside my lips, shouted to the lieutenant on the ramparts, "Open the gate!" He leaned over the battlements, crying in re-

sponse, "I have not the keys!" and making signs also to convey his meaning.

"Bah!" said the Prince de Choiseul d'Aillecourt, "when we get in there, I'll square matters with Messieurs de la Ville for this impertinence."

"It is evident," said M. le Duc, "that the king is not yet in Orleans."

"Nor Mademoiselle either, monsieur," said Mademoiselle, laughing. "But," she added, "Mademoiselle will be, and the king will not."

"In truth," said I, "she will, my life upon it!"

"Ho! ho!" said M. le Duc, "whom have we here?"

"It is the Marquis de Saint-Valery," said M. de Fiesque, who having come from Orleans, recognized the man approaching. "He brings a message from the governor."

"Ho! ho!" said M. le Duc, "what has he under his arm?"

"A box," said the vicomte. "Yes, I can see it is a box."

"Ho! ho!" said M. le Duc, "a box! I am always curious about boxes. Now what can M. le Gouverneur be sending to Mademoiselle in a box?"

"It is a rash man who would answer that question," said M. de Fiesque, "unless he knew all the whimsicalities of M. le Gouverneur, and who can count them?"

The Marquis de Saint-Valery arrived on foot and presented himself before Mademoiselle.

"Well, M. le Marquis," said she, "do you bring me the keys of the Porte de Bourgogne?"

"Alas! no, Mademoiselle, but I bring you a gift from the governor."

"Ho! ho!" whispered M. le Duc, "a gift from the governor!"

"There is no gift, monsieur, that the governor can send me so fitting as the keys of Orleans."

"Alas! Mademoiselle, the governor is powerless, and Messieurs de la Ville are quaking and will not give them up through fear of His Majesty and His Eminence, but M. le Gouverneur begs very humbly to present his respects and offers you this gift until such time as he can safely admit you when he will hasten to do himself that honor," and bowing the Marquis de Saint-Valery extended to Mademoiselle a dainty green box bound with a gilt cord. She took it graciously, amused and somewhat puzzled, and handing it

to me, said smiling, "M. le Comte, open it and let us see M. le Gouverneur's good taste."

I removed the cord and raised the lid.

"Parbleu!" said I, laughing, "no gift-giver ever equaled M. le Gouverneur. His inaptitude matches his irrelevancy. If he goes as he gives, he comes always and ever *mal à propos*," and I handed the box to Mademoiselle.

She glanced at the contents.

"Gentlemen," said she, "M. le Gouverneur has taken the 'step from the sublime to the ridiculous,'" and she extended the box to their gaze.

"Fie! fie!" cried the Prince de Choiseul d'Aillecourt, contemptuously, "sweetmeats!"

"Peste!" cried the vicomte, in anger, "sweetmeats!"

"Ho! ho!" said M. le Duc, sniffing, "sweetmeats! The whimsicalities of M. le Gouverneur! M. de Fiesque, you did well to mention them. Faith! M. le Gouverneur is a Perpignan."

"A Perpignan?" said Mademoiselle, laughing, "who is he? Pray explain, M. le Duc."

"Have you never heard the Ballad of Perpignan?"

"Perpignan? No. What is it, monsieur?"

M. le Duc's nose twitched with joy.

"No? You shall have it. Zounds! and under the walls of Orleans! It is the Duc de Druillon d'Ormesson who takes the *step*, but you shall have it. Attention then, Your Royal Highness, likewise you, messieurs.

"Perpignan galloped through Calais,
Beribboned and in brave array;
His locks were light, his sword was bright,
His feathers fluttered gay,
His justaucorps was violet-laced,
And like a glove it kissed his waist,
And all the ladies hailed in haste
Perpignan at Calais.

"Perpignan in a periwig
Sat on the bench, a saucy prig.
He winked and made a masquerade,
A legal whirligig.
He lipped his Latin manfully
And put the guards in custody
And let the prisoners go free
And with them danced a jig.

"Perpignan pined to play the priest
And at confessional to feast.
His frock of black laughed penance slack
And every wight released.
And when the dames came trooping in,
He listened with a gracious grin
And gave a kiss for every sin,
And so their sins increased.

"Perpignan, clad in bright brocade,
 Plied the apothecary's trade.
 He dished the drugs and filled the mugs
 With powder and pomade.
 He laughed at all the aches and pains
 And gave the sighing, heart-sick swains
 A dose of quinces and quatrains
 And fed them marmalade."

We laughed loudly.

"M. le Duc," said Mademoiselle, "it is M. le
 Gouverneur to the life." Then turning, she tossed
 the box into the moat and drawing herself up,
 faced M. de Saint-Valery. "M. le Marquis," she
 cried, "go tell M. le Gouverneur that before sun-
 set Mademoiselle makes her entry into the Palais
 d'Orléans!"

We left the Marquis de Saint-Valery to deliver
 his message as God gave him wits, and went
 down to the Loire whose bank was crowded
 with the boatmen abounding in Orleans, and, by
 the commotion attending Mademoiselle's arrival,
 brought together from all the quais and from the
 long green Isle de St. Loup that lay before us.
 Their boats blocked the narrow channel between
 the isle and the shore, black, brown and red,
 prow to stern, and filled with broad-shouldered,
 bare-throated fellows who put up a shout when

they saw us and rose among their ropes and oars.

"Pardieu!" said I to the prince, "here are stout muscles oaring their locks well. We'll key them to a braver trade and twist the locks of Orleans."

A score of them stood ashore, and I went to meet them.

"My friends," said I, "you are all brawny boatmen—who are the bold ones?"

"All! all!" they cried.

"Then," said I, "if you speak truly, if each and every man of you bears his brow boldly, and you can number none who, when damnation daunts, cry themselves cravens, yours is the trade of trades, surpassing all cloths and callings, pursuits, affairs, concerns, employments, that are pushed and plied in France. The bakers or the butchers cannot say the same, the reapers or the sowers, the forgerons or the farriers—no! nor the men-at-arms, the Parliament, or the king's council! And so—Vive les bateliers! Theirs is the trade of trades!"

They threw up their caps and shouted with joy.

"And now," said I, "who helms the way for Mademoiselle into her good city of Orleans?"

“All! all!” they cried. “Vive Mademoiselle! Point de Mazarin!”

“Likewise,” said I, laughing, “point de porte et point de port! Tribord! toujours.”

They crowded eagerly into their boats and went zealously to the work, bringing their craft together before the Porte de Bourgogne, lashing them, and blocking the moat from side to side with a floating bridge. I leaped down into the boats, and crossing over, surveyed the quai.

“A ladder!” said I, “a ladder!” and when they had put one in place, fastening it to the boat next the quai, I mounted, crying, “Follow me, friends, to the Porte de Bourgogne!” They came climbing up the high quai, and we advanced to the gate, massive, shut and sullen, its great beams bolted with bars of iron. Above on the battlements, the soldiers cheered, leaning over at the risk of toppling headlong, while across the water, on the hill that fronted this side of the city, I saw the black plumes of M. le Duc, the red dress of the Prince de Choiseul d’Aillecourt, the buff and black trappings of the vicomte, and in their midst, the gray and gold of Mademoiselle. The boatmen attacked the gate, the strokes of the axes answered by the shouts

of those within, shout surging to stroke and stroke to shout, and when all was under way, I went down to the bridge of boats, but before I reached the bank, she stood to meet me.

"Mademoiselle," said I, bowing, "the Porte de Bourgogne bids you welcome."

"And for the hospitality of the Porte de Bourgogne, I thank Monsieur le Comte de Lannoy," and, drawing her glove, she said, smiling, "My hand!"

I kissed it, and we crossed the bridge of boats, followed by the vicomte, the prince, M. le Duc, and M. de Fiesque. I mounted the ladder, and Mademoiselle? She came firmly to her goal, mounting as she would have mounted her dais at the Luxembourg, the battlements blaring on all sides. When we reached the gate, I stepped up on the timbers and taking her in my arms, blazed her through the breach, her white plume bending to the bars.

The drums beat, the guards behind their arquebuses stretched away on either hand in lines of red and silver, the people, a clamoring cortège, shouting and embracing one another, pressed about her to touch with their lips the folds of her gray robe, and Orleans was a city warred and won.

CHAPTER XXV

MADEMOISELLE COMMANDS

MADEMOISELLE made her way to the Hôtel-de-Ville through the streets that rang with her name, and we followed, keeping close and walling welcome when it pressed too hard. Midway we encountered the Marquis de Sourdis. "Ho! ho!" said M. le Duc, who perceived him first, "M. le Gouverneur!" He came on foot, dressed in brown velvet, puffing apologies, and attended by Messieurs de la Ville, who were looking on all sides for a weather-vane to see which way the wind blew.

"Mademoiselle," he stammered, when he had made his way through the crowd, "Mademoiselle, I trust ——"

"Ah! Monsieur le Gouverneur! You set your salutation poorly. The Orleanais are more gallant. When I come to the city of Monsieur, the place to greet me is at the gate."

"Exactly, Mademoiselle, and I was hastening —oh! I assure you hastening very fast, but who

could have believed that you would come so soon? But oh! what joy to see you! what real, real pleasure to welcome you to the city of Monsieur! And my devotion, Mademoiselle, how great! Oh! how very, very great! And my homage, Mademoiselle, how profound! Oh! how punctiliously profound! And my respect, Mademoiselle, how intense! Oh! how inconceivably intense! ——”

“M. le Gouverneur,” said Mademoiselle, “your words are like your box—too sweet by half.”

And then Messieurs de la Ville, scraping their fiddles of flattery, began a fulsome tune, but she cut them short.

“Gentlemen,” said she, “I doubt not that you were prepared to do me all honor. Possibly you expected me by the Porte de la Bannière, but, finding that closed, it was my good pleasure to enter by the Porte de Bourgogne. Therefore, congratulate yourselves, gentlemen, your responsibility is removed, and neither the king nor the cardinal can accuse you of my entry. I alone am answerable for everything, and since persons of my rank on entering a city become its masters, I take my prerogative—my right in the

city of Monsieur. Henceforth then, gentlemen, in Orleans Mademoiselle commands."

She went on her way to the Hôtel-de-Ville, attended by the Prince de Choiseul d'Aillecourt, the vicomte, the governor, and Messieurs de la Ville, while M. le Duc, M. de Fiesque and I set out for the Porte de la Bannière to meet the comtesses and the train. We went up on the battlements and saw the road to Paris stretching away before us, but saw no sign of the coach of the comtesses or of our escort.

"Ah!" said M. de Fiesque, "they are slow."

"Slow?" said M. le Duc, who was peering about on all sides, "I grant it, but the king is not. Look there!" And he pointed to the left down the road to Blois.

We saw in the distance, riding toward Orleans, attended by two trumpeters from the *mousquetaires noir* and mounted like them on a black horse, the king's herald, steel-cased, his cloak blazoned with the *fleurs-de-lis*, his casque catching the sun like a mirror.

"It is the king's herald!" cried M. de Fiesque.

"Yes," said I. "He comes to summon Orleans. Let us go and meet him."

"Where?" said M. le Duc.

"At the Porte de Renart, of course. Do you not see his road leads him there? Let us go and bid him bon jour."

"Ho! ho!" said M. le Duc, "not bad, but I fancy he'll not rest content with that."

"He must," said I, "or go as empty as he comes."

We walked along the battlements through the troops that lined them, and making haste, arrived before the herald.

He came caracoling along the road from Blois, the black musketeers on either side, and like a man sure of himself, pulled up before the Porte de Renart while the trumpeters blew a blast.

"In the king's name!" he cried, looking up at us.

The lieutenant of the guards, leaning over the rampart, gave him answer: "Your message, sir?"

"In the king's name!" he cried again. "Open your gates to His Majesty and to His Eminence the Cardinal Mazarin!"

"The gates of Orleans," I cried, "do not open for the asking, nor its walls topple like Jericho's at the bugle's blast. Go tell His Eminence to seek a lodging elsewhere."

“Go *you*!” he cried, “and tell M. le Marquis de Sourdis I come *de par le roi*, putting his obedience to the proof!”

“The Marquis de Sourdis!” shouted M. le Duc. “A good jest, by my faith! He governs Orleans no more than you.”

“Nor half as much,” I cried. “Your speeches spin you listeners at the least, but M. le Marquis de Sourdis?—Pardieu! let him bawl or bellow, squall, squeak or squeal, or split the air as suits his fancy, the head that hears him does not dwell in Orleans, nor the hand that heeds!”

“Then who commands?”

“Who commands? I’ll tell you:

“One who cannot quake or quail,
Clad in courage as in mail;
One whose word the warrior wields,
Quick’ning soldiers’ hearts to shields.
One whose glance, like reveille,
Marshals morions for the fray,
Cuts the cullions’ craven run,
Makes them men and leads them on.
One whose beauty, burning far,
Heads us heavenward, like a star,
While our flashing falchions flare
In their joy to do and dare.
One for whom our latest breath,
Lightly laughing, kisses death.
One whose name—a citadel!—
Guards Orleans,—’tis Mademoiselle!”

"Mademoiselle!" he cried, "Mademoiselle in Orleans?"

"Aye! in Orleans! Spur that to His Majesty and to His Eminence."

He sat his horse, irresolute, and then said defiantly, "I'll not believe it till I have seen her."

"Ho! ho!" cried M. le Duc, "the royal army!"

We looked quickly down the road to Blois and saw, far off but advancing, the musketeers of M. de Turenne, the porte-arquebuses glittering through the shifting cloud of dust, the pennons fluttering, and even as we gazed, they halted and wheeling rank on rank, flamed us a wide front that stretched away toward the road to Paris, immovable and threatening.

"In the king's name!" cried the herald, "I summon you. Open your gates to His Majesty, or write yourselves rebels and face the royal wrath."

"Stand!" I cried, "stand your ground firmly! You'll see a sight! M. de Turenne and His Eminence may see it likewise—aye! and the king himself—and in the seeing gain wisdom and belief, which now you lack, and, having seen, trammel your trumpeting or draw swords as suits you."

We left him before the Porte de Renart and went in all haste to the Hôtel-de-Ville. Mademoiselle was in the council-hall, seated in the governor's carved chair with the arms of Orleans above her and before her captains and lieutenants from the garrison.

"Ah! M. le Comte de Lannoy," said she, "do you bring me news of the comtesses?"

"In truth, Mademoiselle, I had quite forgotten them."

"Forgotten, monsieur?"

"Forgotten because more weighty business presses. The royal army is before Orleans, and the king's herald at the gate."

"You hear, gentlemen," she said, turning to them proudly. "What is your answer?"

They drew swords and crowded about her, pledging themselves to her and to the Fronde.

"Mademoiselle," said I, when the tumult had subsided, "I have informed His Majesty's herald that Your Royal Highness is in Orleans and bidden him begone."

"And you have done well, monsieur."

"He does not believe it."

"Ma foi! he shall see. If he cannot trust his ears, his eyes shall prove more faithful.

And the king's army, you say, is without the walls?"

"It is."

"The king's army, likewise, shall have proof. Gentlemen, — to the battlements! Aline your men, unfurl your flags! I'll come to ray you in review and all Orleans attend me."

They answered by a ringing cheer and crowded from the council-hall, chivalrous and belligerent, a shifting, vanishing flame of red and silver.

"They'll play their parts well, is it not so, messieurs?" said Mademoiselle.

"Corbleu!" said the Prince de Choiseul d'Aillecourt. "They are, like Cæsar's Tenth Legion, yours to a man."

"But I am not Cæsar, M. le Prince."

"Oh, no!" cried M. le Duc, "but you are much more. You are Cleopatra and Semiramis in one."

Mademoiselle laughed merrily.

"Monsieur le Duc de Druillon d'Ormesson," said she, "I prefer to remain Mademoiselle de Montpensier."

We heard the drums beating on the Place de l'Hôtel-de-Ville, and she rose. "Gentlemen," said she, "while you search a vanished past for

idle similes, the present claims us. March then, messieurs, with heads held high where the drums of duty call."

The sun was rushing to his rest, but, before reaching the horizon, checked his course as though loath to lose the sight of Orleans. He flashed across the Loire, reddening the roofs on the Isle de Charlemagne, framing the casques with fire, fringing the flashing halberds, scintillating on the swords and wrapping the gray walls in golden glory.

Mademoiselle advanced to the battlements at the Porte de la Bannière, the Prince de Choiseul d'Aillecourt and M. de Fiesque at her left, the vicomte, M. le Duc, and I at her right, and Orleans in her train. We reached the gate and mounted to the battlements. From the Porte de la Bannière to the Porte de Renart and continuing to the river, the Orleans soldiery glittered, double-ranked, arquebuse behind arquebuse, arm to arm. They saw her, and the long lines flashed mettlesome and militant. The drums rolled, the banners flared their folds, the swords sent their points heavenward, and then—the ranks of the regiments roaring on all sides, her trumpeters pealing proudly in advance—she came, her hand

steel-set lines, through the swords that surged above her glorious plume, on and on! on and on! sweeping to the martial music's swell, she sought the Porte de la Bannière, on and on! on and on! hearts-exalting, honor-ranking, courage-quicken-ing, laurel-laden, on and on! on and on!—Orleans saved by her name!

And the sun, having seen, sank.

mand for its suzerain, Monsieur, and neither His Majesty, His Eminence, nor Monsieur le Maréchal de Turenne shall enter it but by the sword."

He bowed again and wheeling galloped down the road to Blois, the musketeers behind him.

But Mademoiselle stood immovable, like a sentinel, her eyes following him, and the serried ranks that crowned the Orleans ramparts, a mighty, motionless mass, waited, hushed and curbing courage. He dwindled, disappearing at last into the dark distant line that marked Turenne's vainglorious van, and still she stood, silent as the kings that crowd St. Denis, guarding her city like a patron saint to whom all men must kneel.

And as we gazed, Turenne's vainglorious van wheeled into line, and melted, and vanished, and was gone.

The drums rolled, the banners flared their folds, the swords sent their points heavenward, and then—the ranks of the regiments roaring on all sides, her trumpeters pealing proudly in advance—she came, her hand on her hip, her gilded cords gleaming, her gold-butted riding-whip winging her hat in salute.

Thus through the shouts that shook the rigid

"Bid them open it in my name and bring the comtesses to me."

He bowed and went his way in haste. She turned to us and said laughing, "Gentlemen, it is well we rode, is it not?" Then saluting the crowd who had not ceased to cheer, she entered the Hôtel-de-Ville.

We planned to leave that evening for Paris—M. le Duc and I—while the vicomte, the prince, and M. de Fiesque remained in Orleans from which the tide of war had rolled away. Therefore we supped at once, and setting out at eight o'clock with our valets and three guardsmen, rode rapidly to Artenay where we spent the night. At seven on the following morning, we sat saddles again and pushed on to Étampes, to Bretigny and to Longjumeau. The air was full of rumors: that the royal army was at Sully, that the royal army was marching upon Paris, that the royal army was in Orleans. Of the first two we knew nothing; the last we answered well. Paris held us at the barriers, M. le Duc asking and answering questions vigorously, and when I had made clear to the lieutenant on guard ourselves and our business, we passed and gaining the Rue de Médicis, arrived at the Luxembourg.

Before setting foot to the ground, we saw M. de Longueville rushing from the palace toward his coach which stood in the courtyard.

"M. de Longueville!" I cried, spurring forward, "M. de Longueville!" He turned to me his face, usually so cheerful, now filled with rage and despair.

"Orleans?" he cried, "Orleans?"

"Orleans is saved," said I, "but you—what has happened?"

"All is lost here!"

"What! what!" cried M. le Duc, twitching in his saddle, "explain! explain!"

"Paris, I tell you," cried M. de Longueville, distractedly, "Paris is lost and we likewise!"

We sprang from our horses, and I drew him away out of the hearing of the valets and the guardsmen.

"Now," said I, "calm yourself, if you can, and make yourself clear."

"Yes, yes," cried M. le Duc, dancing up and down with excitement, "calm yourself!"

"Well," said I, "what has happened?"

"The Maréchal Laferté Senectère has joined Mazarin with the army of Lorraine."

"Ho! ho!" cried M. le Duc, "Laferté Senectère!"

"And if he has," said I, "is Paris lost or are we?—bah!"

"You little know how things go here," he answered. "Who is the governor of Paris?"

"The Maréchal de l'Hôpital."

"Exactly. Where is he now, think you?"

"Faith!" said I, "a fine question to ask me who have ridden post-haste from Orleans! At a venture—the Hôtel-de-Ville."

"He's in there," said he, pointing over his shoulder nervously.

"Ho! ho!" said M. le Duc. "At the Luxembourg!"

"And if he is?" said I. "What if he is? The governor of Paris pays a visit to the lieutenant-general of the kingdom, and you straightway bellow, 'Paris is lost!' My fear is not for Paris, but for your wits."

"My wits," said he, "ah! they've been keen to-day. What has he in his pocket?"

"Zounds!" I cried, "you are mad!"

"Oh! without doubt," said M. le Duc. "Now in your case, you need bleeding. You are flushed; you are too full."

"Your jest is out of tune," he answered. "I'll tell you. He has in his pocket a treaty for him and his signed by Mazarin."

M. le Duc was speechless.

"Tonnerre!" I cried. "How do you know that?"

"Through M. de Bouillon."

"But he may have been mistaken."

"No. The maréchal sounded him. De Bouillon let him say on and saw."

"Heavens!" cried M. le Duc, "a treaty!"

"By which he pledges himself?" said I.

"By which he pledges himself to shut the gates of Paris against M. de Condé and the army of the Fronde and to open them to Mazarin and the king."

"And he is at the Luxembourg?"

"He is there to gain Monsieur. He is wheedling him at this moment. You know Monsieur. I dare say he will have the like in *his* pocket before night; at least I know who has one ready for him and is with him now."

"Who?"

"The Prince de Pajou."

"Ho! ho!" cried M. le Duc. "Pajouette!"

"Do you mean to say the Prince de Pajou is with Monsieur?" I cried.

"I mean just that," he answered. "He is there, sent specially by Mazarin. You know Monsieur. I dare say the treaty may be in his pocket at this moment. I tell you Paris is lost. In less than a week, Mazarin will be at the Palais Royal, and we in exile or worse."

"Ho! ho!" said M. le Duc, "this is serious."

I looked up at the windows of the Luxembourg and could not help muttering, "And Monsieur is *her* father!"

"You see! You see!" said M. de Longueville, excitedly.

"Yes," said I, "I see, but, if this is so, I do *not* see why you are leaving the Luxembourg."

"St. Jude! I have asked an audience. Monsieur will not receive me."

"Heavens!" cried M. le Duc. "It is worse and worse!"

"Monsieur shall receive you," said I, "for you shall enter with us."

"But suppose he refuses you?"

"Refuse me? Faith! he'll not do that. You forget—I come from Orleans."

"True, he may want to hear."

"He will. He lacks courage but not curiosity. And now, my friends, I'll give you a cue—my

hand upon my sword thus, or my hand against my breast thus—and when you see these signs, sing the same. There may be many tunes, so keep the key in all.”

CHAPTER XXVII

MONSIEUR'S CABINET

WE entered the palace, and ascending the staircase, passed the Salle des Gardes where the red-coated Suisse were at their posts, and gained the antechamber. The huissier on duty advanced to meet us.

"Announce," said I, "M. le Comte de Lannoy, M. le Duc de Druillon d'Ormesson and M. le Duc de Longueville."

"But, M. le Comte," said he, "at present Monsieur can see no one."

"Is he ill?"

"No, but he is engaged."

"Tell him I come from Mademoiselle."

He bowed and entered the cabinet.

"Shall we get audience, think you?" said M. de Longueville.

"Do you fancy that frail painted door can bar my road to Monsieur?" said I. "Whatever comes, I'll have an audience, though in the getting it I ride etiquette rough-shod. But never fear, he will receive us."

In a moment we saw the huissier returning.

"Messieurs," said he, "Monsieur grants you audience."

"Did I not tell you?" said I to M. de Longueville, and we entered, the huissier announcing us.

Monsieur arrayed in blue velvet, perfumed if anything a trifle more than usual and slightly rouged, was dawdling in his armchair before a table covered with papers of one sort or another, and opposite sat the Maréchal de l'Hôpital, wigged and wizened, with an abundance of gold lace, rings on every finger, his long snout, protruding upper-lip and retreating chin giving him the physiognomy of a rat. We bowed, M. le Duc and I at least a sufficient contrast with our splashed boots and travel-stained dresses. Monsieur bent forward slightly, while the maréchal, rising, nodded and blinked. As for the Prince de Pajou, he was not to be seen, and this puzzled me for I perceived but one door, that by which we had entered.

"Well, M. le Comte," said Monsieur, with an air of affected indifference, "what news from Orleans?"

"I have the honor to inform Your Royal Highness that Mademoiselle has entered Orleans."

"Ah! And the royal army?"

"Is not at Orleans, Monsieur."

"No? Where is it then?"

"Your Royal Highness can answer that question better than I. People say that it is marching upon Paris."

"I doubt it."

"However," said I, "it is possible. Now, if it should come, I dare say M. le Gouverneur has arranged to receive His Eminence."

"What! I?" blustered the maréchal. "I receive His Eminence?"

"With cannon, sir."

"Oh yes, of course, of course! With cannon!"

"The city of Paris is fortunate to have so vigilant a governor," said I, bowing, my hand on my sword.

"Ah!" said M. le Duc, following suit, "the firmness of M. le Gouverneur of Paris is magnificent. With cannon! Pardieu! it is a bright example. The governor of Orleans cannot furnish the like."

"No," said M. de Longueville, "nor the governors of Blois or of Chartres. You have heard his word, gentlemen; his faith, who can question it?"

The Maréchal de l'Hôpital made us a series of fine bows and sat down to nibble his cheese.

"Drop Paris," said Monsieur, wearily. "Let us hear of Orleans."

"Orleans?" said I. "Faith! those people have no business to bother Your Royal Highness with their affairs."

He flushed.

"M. le Comte," said he, curtly, "you trifle. I desire to know how matters stand in Orleans."

"I have had the honor to give Your Royal Highness my message already. As for Orleans and the Orleanais—parbleu! I'll tell you something much more to the point. His Eminence has written a farce-comedy, a very amusing one. It is called the *Porte de Paris*. Shall Your Royal Highness attend the first performance?"

Monsieur was flustered, the maréchal stupefied, while M. le Duc and M. de Longueville eyed me curiously with glances that said plainly, "What next?" And then I saw the crimson curtain, that partly screened a window, move slightly. "Ah!" I muttered, "at last!"

"I did not know, sir," said Monsieur, plainly at a loss for an answer, "that His Eminence was a play-wright."

"No? And have you never met the comedian of His Eminence?"

"The comedian of His Eminence?"

"Exactly," said I. "A farce-comedy cannot be a success, let the author work his wits howe'er he will, unless it be well rendered. There must be a jack-pudding, a pantaloon, a merry andrew, a motley mime to cream it with his quiddity. His Eminence has such a fellow, a babbling buffoon, a mouthing mountebank, broad in all the ways of waggery, and hence His Eminence's farce-comedies are so successful."

"And who is this fellow?" said Monsieur, reddening under his rouge. It was a chance, but I took it, strode to the window, and dashing the curtain aside, fronted the Prince de Pajou whose pale face for once was flushed. I seized him by the collar and whirled him into the centre of the cabinet where he spun round and round on his red heels, and, losing his balance, fell in a heap on the floor.

"Monsieur," said I, "I have the honor to present to Your Royal Highness, Pajouette, comedian to His Eminence, the first *farceur* in France!"

"Ho! ho!" cried M. le Duc, "it is—" but

the rest was lost in the howl of rage that came from the Prince de Pajou.

It was a critical moment. The maréchal was on his feet quaking, Monsieur rising likewise in agitation, but fortune was with us still. "See!" said I, "his letters-patent!" and before any one could reach it, I swept up a paper that had fallen from the prince's pocket as he fell. It was folded four times. I unfolded it slowly, and at each fold the paper rustled, and they quivered. I scanned it from first to last. It was the treaty—the treaty for Monsieur signed by Mazarin—and when I had read it all, caught all the clauses, aye! counted all the commas, and knew for a certainty that by it Monsieur was pledged to open the gates of Paris to the cardinal, I raised my head.

"Faith!" said I, "these letters-patent of Pajouette are very amusing. I fancy, Monsieur, you will enjoy them. Prepare then for a *jeu-d'esprit*. I'll read them to you. '*De par le Roi*: To all men by these presents be it known that Pajouette, comedian to His Eminence, shall, by reason of his wit and whimsicality, take precedence once and forever over all other jokers and jesters, punsters and posturemakers, tumblers

and acrobats, charlatans and harlequins, and alone bear the proud title—First Fool in France. Signed Mazarin.’ ”

The *maréchal* gave a gasp of relief, Monsieur, who had turned pale, caught color again, and they both sank into their chairs as though their legs could no longer support them. The Prince de Pajou, meanwhile, favored us with an assortment of oaths uttered with a force and rapidity that soon took away his breath and left him sputtering. As for M. le Duc and M. de Longueville, my back was toward them, and I could not see their bearing.

“Monsieur,” said I, advancing to the table, “I present to Your Royal Highness the letters-patent of Pajouette,” and I gave M. le Duc d’Orléans a glance that I fancy he did not forget soon.

He took the paper, read it in a dazed manner, though he knew perfectly what was there, and then looked at me with a glance by no means steady.

“And what am I to do with this, M. le Comte de Lannoy ?” said he, huskily.

“Sign it, Monsieur.”

I heard a smothered exclamation from M. le Duc, M. de Longueville looked at me aghast, the

maréchal blinked his eyes and dropped his jaw, the Prince de Pajou lost his last oath in a gulp of wonder, Monsieur was nonplussed.

"Certainly," said I, quietly. "Sign it, Monsieur. I'll give you a pen," and taking from the table a taper that burned beside the wax, I presented it to him.

"The pen, Monsieur," said I. "Will Your Royal Highness sign?" He looked at me and then slowly raised above the flame the paper that held in its folds the hopes and traps and treachery of Mazarin, and the flame caught a corner and spread wrapping and enveloping it, burned high and died away, leaving in his hand a bit black at the end. He tossed it into the fireplace, and I replaced the taper. The Maréchal de l'Hôpital looked like a rat ready to run for cover.

"Monsieur," said I, with an emphasis he could not fail to understand for all his lack of wit, "the incident is closed," and I placed my hand lightly on my breast.

"Yes," said M. le Duc, catching the cue, "quite closed." A speech that must have cost him a tremendous struggle.

"I, likewise," said M. de Longueville, "in-

form Your Royal Highness that the incident is closed."

There was a frightful howl from the Prince de Pajou, and I turned to see him lunging at me frantically, sword in hand, while M. le Duc held him from behind, clasping him round the shoulders.

"Pish!" said I, laughing, "the comedian has the floor," and striding to him, I wrenched the sword from his jeweled fingers. "Monsieur," said I, "I beg that you will issue a *lettre de cachet* for Pajouette, who has so far forgotten himself as to draw a sword in your presence."

Monsieur, relieved of his load, had recovered his equanimity somewhat and desired nothing better than to be rid of the prince. He seized the bell-cord and pulled it twice violently. The captain of the guard appeared.

"M. de Bouteville-Dumetz," said he, "conduct M. le Prince de Pajou to the Bastille."

At the word, the prince shook as he had shaken in his coach on the Cours, his fury sunk in fear. De Bouteville-Dumetz placed his hand upon his shoulder, and at the touch he trembled.

"One moment, Monsieur," said I. "Pajouette is, after all, only a comedian. We ought not to

take him seriously. I dare say he has been giving us some choice bit from one of His Eminence's plays, though I grant you the selection was ill-judged and ill-timed. Therefore, I beg Your Royal Highness to overlook his folly and leave him still at large to amuse the good Parisians, provided he will now sing us one of his comic songs."

"Does he sing comic songs?" said Monsieur.

"Faith!" said I, "he does. They are very laughable, and he sings them merrily."

"Then Monsieur le Prince de Pajou," said Monsieur, smacking his lips with the relish of being out of a box and some one else in, "the comic song or the Bastille. Come, choose!"

"Ho! ho!" cried M. le Duc, "a comic song! delicious!"

"A comic song!" echoed the maréchal who wished himself safe at the Hôtel-de-Ville, "delightful!"

"A comic song!" said M. de Longueville, "magnificent!"

"What shall he sing?" cried M. le Duc, gleefully.

"Can you ask?" said I. "Oh! sweetly ——"

"Glorious! glorious!" he cried. "Come,

Pajouette, I'll give you the words, and you shall sing them after me. Keep the key! keep the key!" and he began in his discordant voice:

" Oh ! sweetly puff the praise of Pajouette,
The children's pretty pet,
The harmless Pajouette,
The Marquis Marmelade de Marmousette,
since Pierrot-Poupée de Pajouette."

And there in the cabinet of Monsieur, before us all, the Prince de Pajou, the proud, pompous, lying, vain, deceitful Prince de Pajou, was compelled to repeat that doggerel line by line, for in his case, singing it was out of the question, choked as he was with fear, with fury, and with shame, and at the last, he fell in a fit, and his lackeys bore him to his coach. I had had my revenge. Mon Dieu! it was a cruel one. I must say I pitied him. He had better have chosen the Bastille. It would have been less hard.

CHAPTER XXVIII

MADAME LA DUCHESSE

It was growing dark when we left the Luxembourg. The Maréchal de l'Hôpital had departed, *chapeau sous bras*, some time before. I had given Monsieur a statement of affairs in Orleans and received from him a letter for Mademoiselle. As we reached his coach, M. de Longueville turned to me. "M. le Comte," said he, "you have saved Monsieur."

"Yes," said I, "and do you know why?"

"No."

"Because he is the father of Mademoiselle. Adieu, M. de Longueville. We leave for Orleans in the morning."

"And to-night?"

"Oh," said M. le Duc, "to-night M. le Comte is *chez moi*, Faubourg St. Germain. Adieu."

"Adieu."

He saluted us and his coach bore him away. We mounted and rode down the Rue de Tournon and so to the Rue de l'Université.

"M. le Duc," said I, "you are a hero."

"How, pray?" said he, laughing.

"Because you have conquered yourself. Come now, your word to Monsieur—it was hard to give, eh?"

"By my life! it was. Think of the sensation I could ——"

"No," said I, "don't think of it, or the devil will have you by the ears."

"True. It is toying with temptation."

"Then banish it. I have given my word to a man whose character is contemptible, whose faith is an idle jest, but I've not slain the sacrifice for Monsieur. Monsieur? Bah! But Monsieur is *her* father, so while I live, I guard his honor as my own."

We arrived at M. le Duc's hôtel.

"By the by," said he, as we dismounted, "have you ever met Madame la Duchesse?"

"Never."

"A remarkable woman."

We entered, and M. le Duc conducted me to my apartment where my valets brought my traveling equipage. An hour under the hands of Bazille, and I was dressed to sup. M. le Duc met me at the staircase.

"Entre nous," said he, ruefully, as we came down, "madame is not pleased that I went to Orleans."

"Indeed! Did she not know?"

"You have hit it. I didn't tell her."

"Zounds!" said I, laughing, "Monsieur is safe when M. le Duc de Druillon d'Ormesson can keep a secret from his wife. You must have her well in hand."

"Alas!" said he. "I wish I had. I have tried, but—mon Dieu! a remarkable woman."

We entered the salon where fully fifty wax candles were blazing in the silver lustres. A green marble chimney, set with gilded reliefs of Mars and Minerva, ran the height of the apartment, and before it I saw Madame la Duchesse. Her robe of ruby velvet swept behind her; her stiff stomacher of white satin was roped with pearls; her full sleeves ended in large puffs of lace below her elbows, and a broad straight band of lace, caught above the stomacher by a diamond knot, ran round her shoulders; great pearl pendants hung from her ears; her hair fell in tiny curls over her forehead and long curls elsewhere, and though she had no jewels about her neck, her person, otherwise, was decked with

them like a rajah's. As for madame herself, she had probably been handsome in her youth and still showed traces of it, but she had now said good-bye to fifty and stood tall, stout, and coarse-featured as a Suisse, and vigorous—oh! very vigorous. I admired M. le Duc's courage. I think, had she been my wife, I would have told her I was going to Orleans.

"Madame," said M. le Duc, bowing, "here is Monsieur le Comte de Lannoy."

She gave me a grand courtesy and sailed forward like a man-of-war about to salute a friendly power.

"Welcome, monsieur! welcome!" she cried, in a loud, strong voice. "You come from Orleans?"

"I do, Madame la Duchesse."

"And you have brought him back to me. I shall not soon forgive him," (here she shook her fan at M. le Duc). "He went without a word. Would you believe it? Such anxiety!——"

"But, madame," said M. le Duc.

"Not a word, sir!" she cried, majestically, "not a word! Not a syllable, not even half a syllable! Pardi! I am an old shawl, am I? I of the house of de Goazre de Kervelegan! I am

mufti, rags, togs, tatters to be donned or dropped at will? Who pays? Who pays? Not a sou shall you have! not a sou! Shall you go far then, think you? Ha! ha! Shall you go far?"

Poor M. le Duc looked quite crestfallen, and madame was about to continue her apostrophe when the corpulent maitre d'hôtel bowed himself through the door and announced with a flourish, "Madame la Duchesse is served." She sailed up to him and cracked him on the head with her fan. "Guignault!" she cried, "you bow like a jackanapes. Turn out your toes!" Then without waiting for either of us, she swept into the *salle à manger*. I looked at M. le Duc, who was gazing at the end of his nose with a woeful expression.

"You heard her," said he, mournfully, "not a sou!"

"Come, come," said I, laughing, "you have what all the world wants, a rich wife, and are not content? Preposterous! A hundred louis that I have her arms about your neck within the hour and that you ride to-morrow with me to Orleans."

"But I have not a crown."

"Oh! as for that, if I should lose, you'll have

a hundred louis, and if I win, she'll give you twice a hundred crowns."

"Done. My hand upon it."

We entered. Madame la Duchesse stood before the table with a lackey behind her ready to place her chair when it pleased her to sit, while two other lackeys in yellow liveries were drawn up like men-at-arms, gazing into space, fearful of moving muscle.

"M. le Comte de Lannoy," said she, with her commanding manner, "you make a tardy entrance. Sit here, monsieur, next me, and you, sir, sit there remote. I was de Goazre de Kervelegan before I became de Druillon d'Ormesson and am so still."

"Madame la Duchesse," said I, "the fact is apparent for the beauty of Mademoiselle de Goazre de Kervelegan at this moment lights Madame la Duchesse de Druillon d'Ormesson."

"Monsieur le Comte de Lannoy," said she, tapping me with her fan, "*you* are a man of sense."

"And you, madame, a woman of sense."

She gave me her imposing courtesy, and we sat, the candles gleaming before us, the potage *chapons vieux* strong and savory awaiting us, and the lackeys moving lightly on all sides.

"Now, monsieur," said she, "let me learn his doings. There were bright eyes in Orleans, eh?"

"The brightest eyes in France."

"Oh! he followed their glances, I'll be bound."

"He did, Madame la Duchesse, and he was prompt to do their bidding."

"Wretch!" she cried, looking fiercely at M. le Duc, who was eying me with surprise. "Look at me, sir, look at me! I am well worth looking at. Not a sou, sir! not a soul!"

"I could tell you more," said I, sighing, "but I fear that I shall wound you. Mon Dieu! I may have wounded you already, and that would give me grief."

"Wound me?" cried the duchesse. "Rubbish! I'm callous. Wound me? Bah! Unmask him, monsieur! unmask him!"

"Well, then," said I, "if you must have it—but no, no, Madame la Duchesse, I cannot. He's hard hit, but you—you love him still. I cannot."

"I love him?" cried the duchesse, pounding the table in a frenzy of curiosity. "Stuff! carrots! I loathe him! Show him up! Show him up!"

"Madame la Duchesse," said I, "you fling from you God's fairest gift to man when you fling love. The flowers that bloom before us here upon the table are well nurtured. Could not the Hôtel de Druillon d'Ormesson nurture that as well? But—as you will. I have told you that he followed the glances of the bright eyes, that he was prompt to do their bidding, but what I have not told you is that it was not by chance he saw them in Orleans. He followed them there from Paris."

"Monstrous!" she cried, glaring at M. le Duc as though she intended to take him for the next course. "Don't sit there blinking at me behind that nose of yours. The fine song you were singing about duty, the king's army,—God knows what!—not a word would I hear of that, eh? And they'll come—a bill for your new court cloak, five hundred francs, I fancy. Not a sou, not a sou, not a sou! A bill for your lace, for your court-boots—not a sou! Who pays? Get it at tric-trac or the devil! Oh, yes! you like to run helter-skelter wagging your tongue. I'll give it something to wag about. The Prince de Goazre de Kervelegan was a fool and I was a fool and you are a fool! Go to Orleans and find

the strumpet, whoever she is, what do I care! what do I care! what do I care!" And Madame la Duchesse buried her face in her jeweled hands and wept bitterly.

"And you," said M. le Duc, regarding me reproachfully, "you are a *friend*!"

I gave him a glance and rose.

"Madame la Duchesse," said I, "it is not Monsieur le Duc de Druillon d'Ormesson who has caused your tears to flow. I am the culprit, and had I seen the goal to which my light folly led me, I had long since halted. And yet, those tears, Madame la Duchesse, show me that God's best gift to man is with you still. I urged Monsieur le Duc upon Orleans, and I, with him, followed the bright eyes and was prompt to do their bidding, so, if Monsieur le Duc de Druillon d'Ormesson is a sinner, I am a sinner too. And you, Madame la Duchesse, shall sit in judgment on us both, rendering your verdict whether in our doing we have done well or ill when the eyes that we followed and the eyes that we obeyed were the eyes of the Grand Mademoiselle."

She raised her head, a bright smile breaking through her tears, and bowing to her joy, I sang:

"Madame, your spouse, Monsieur le Duc,
Pray, pray, madame, do not rebuke,
He bears like Mars a proud peruke,
And he is a warrior bold.
If you had stood, madame, with me,
Beheld his plumes nod martially
And seen him face the enemy,
You'd echo my word fourfold,

"Surge and soar! Rush and roar!
That is the battle's fray.
And some there are who foam and fall,
And others who run away.
But he who's primed to press the foe,
Whether the foemen come or no,
His faith is firm, his heart is high,
He is paramount his clay."

"And it was Mademoiselle you followed to Orleans?" she cried, joyfully. "And he was brave?"

"As a lion, Madame la Duchesse."

"Pardi! to think of it! Bully boy!"

She ran to him and, seizing him round the neck with her stout arms, gave him a kiss that shook the candlesticks.

"'Kitten!'" she cried, "'kitten,' a warrior, a knight of chivalry! Pardi! to think of it! And they'll come, the lace, the cloak, and the court boots, and he shall have them all and whatever else he wants. Oh! I dare say I'm not as hand-

some as I was, for all the Comte de Lannoy's fine speeches, but 'kitten' thinks so, doesn't he?"

"He does! he does!" cried M. le Duc, ecstatically.

And so amid much cooing and billing of doves that had fluttered and flown for fifty odd summers, peace came again to the Hôtel de Druillon d'Ormesson.

CHAPTER XXIX

MONSIEUR MALADE

ON the following morning we were ready early for the journey to Orleans, M. le Duc radiant with a full pocket and the approval of his duchesse, but before we quitted the Hôtel de Druillon d'Ormesson, M. de Longueville was announced.

"Ho! ho!" said M. le Duc, "you look like a thundercloud."

"And like it bear a storm," said he. "Corbleu! I feared to find you gone. M. le Prince de Condé has been compelled to fall back to Charenton."

"What! what!" cried M. le Duc, "at the very walls? And the royal army?"

"It is marching upon Paris. At the Hôtel-de-Ville they have lost their heads, all babbling plans each more prodigious than the last."

"They'll babble thus," said I, "until the end of all things. I know them. And M. le Gouverneur?"

"His plan is beautiful in its simplicity. I fancy you can guess it."

"Yes," said I. "To save his skin."

"Exactly. Now what are we to do?"

"Monsieur," said I, "Paris cannot save herself, nor does the safety of Paris rest in Paris. We must seek it at Orleans."

"At Orleans?"

"Yes, at Orleans. She who has saved Orleans can save Paris likewise."

"I never thought of that. There's hope for the Fronde yet. Mon Dieu! can you accomplish it?"

"We'll try, but for the sure accomplishment we lack one thing, a thing the most serviceable and the most squandered; a thing which in the using makes and unmakes men, or locks a name, once flung afar, into a dark and dusty, long-forgotten roll; a thing the schoolboy scorns, the merchant values, and the scholar hoards, and no man knows the truth of till he dies—we lack, Monsieur le Duc de Longueville—time."

"True. Go! go at once! and the hopes of the Fronde go with you."

We left him, mounted in haste, and followed the Rue de l'Université to the Rue de Seine, then

to the Rue Mouffetard and so to the walls of Paris. Everywhere there was commotion as in the days of the barricades, but leaving all behind us, we pushed out into the open country. I fancy the peasants who stared at us stupidly took us for couriers by the pace. We reached Villejuif without drawing rein, but a quarter of a league beyond, I pulled up and waited a moment for M. le Duc. His horse was not so good as mine.

"M. le Duc," said I, when he came, "look down the road."

"I see nothing."

"Where are you looking? There to the left where the road branches beyond the poplars."

"Ho! ho!"

"Men-at-arms, eh?"

"No doubt."

"The king's?"

"Like enough."

"They are advancing."

"So they are."

"Bazille!" I cried, turning to the valets who had halted behind, "come here." And when he had ridden up, I said, "What do you make of that?"

"Men-at-arms, M. le Comte."

"We can see that, but your eyes, I know their worth, can they not tell us more?"

"I cannot make them out, M. le Comte."

"Then we must return to Villejuif," said M. le Duc, "and wait there till they pass."

"We ride," said I, "to Orleans. Parbleu! we'll go, though Turenne, Senectère, and Mazarin inflame our front. But first we'll know who and what we face, and here's the place to learn. I will not move."

Therefore we sat our horses, scanning the road eagerly. The trees hid the halberds from our sight, and then we saw them far away before us.

"Ho! ho!" said M. le Duc, "a coach behind the halberds!"

"Red coats," said I. "It may be the king's carriage."

"But not the king's army," said he, "there are not more than two score."

"Come," said I, "it is the king. I'll make my first bow to His Majesty and trust my wits to pull me through. Come then!"

"Your wits," said he, "are sharper than our swords. Go then!"

We galloped forward, but before riding far, I drew rein a second time.

"M. le Duc," I cried, "they are the guards of Monsieur!"

"Pardieu!" he shouted, "so they are! And look beside the coach! beside the coach!"

"Magnificent! The vicomte! It is the coach of Mademoiselle."

"But is she in it?"

"No sooner said than solved," I cried, dashing on.

But I was convinced that she was there; she must be there, or how explain her cortège on the road to Paris? Faith! how explain it there at all? I could not nor cared to—sufficient that it was there, advancing heaven-sent. Whirling these thoughts, I galloped forward and passing at last the guards of Monsieur, rode toward her carriage, signalling to the postillions. They checked their horses, and I was at the carriage-door and face to face with Mademoiselle. The Comtesses de Frontenac and de Fiesque were in her carriage, but I did not perceive them until later; I did not perceive the vicomte beside the other door; I saw her only. The few days that had flown since I left her in Orleans seemed each a year which, adding each to each, had left her grander and more fair. And so I stood, content

with seeing, forgetful why I came, so true it is the heart hails that it loves, laughing the head to scorn.

"Ah! it is Monsieur le Comte de Lannoy," said Mademoiselle, smiling. "He brings us news of Paris."

"He brings you, Mademoiselle," said I, "a letter from Monsieur."

"Ma foi! and what has Monsieur to say?"

She broke the seal and read it, solemnly at first, then with a merry light in her eyes. "Mesdames," said she, laughing, "you are much honored. Here is one for you," and she handed to Madame de Frontenac a second letter which had been within the first. "Read the address, ma belle."

"What!" said Madame de Frontenac, laughing likewise. "'À Mesdames les Comtesses de Frontenac et de Fiesque, Maréchaes de Camp dans l'armée de ma fille contre le Mazarin.'"

"M. le Comte de Lannoy," said Mademoiselle, merrily, "are they not grand? Maréchaes de Camp! Are they not grand? Oh! Monsieur is in jolly humor."

"Monsieur," said I, "is gallant to say the least." And in truth that was all that could be said.

"However," said Mademoiselle, "he will not give me a good reception, nor you either, Mesdames les Maréchaux de Camp."

"And how so, Mademoiselle?" said Madame de Fiesque, raising her large brown eyes coquettishly.

"Because, madame, he requests me in his letter to remain in Orleans. It is evident they do not pine for us in Paris. Now were we still in Orleans, perhaps—but as it is, Monsieur is too late."

"Yes, much too late," said I. "M. le Prince de Condé is encamped at Charenton. His Majesty and His Eminence are marching upon Paris."

"Ah!" said Mademoiselle, in a tone that had a depth of meaning, and then, "Bon jour, Monsieur le Duc."

M. le Duc saluted her.

"Mademoiselle," said he, "we took your cortège for the king's. Was it not droll?"

"And yet, M. le Duc," said I, "we did not greatly err. We found our sovereign."

"In that case, gentlemen," said Mademoiselle, smiling, "your sovereign ventures to give you an order. Our promptitude was valiant at Or-

leans; our punctuality can do much for Paris. Pray mount again."

She gave the signal, and her carriage started, while M. le Duc and I, mounting, joined the vicomte.

"My dear Lannoy," said he, "you see us sooner than you fancied, eh?"

"Much. Whose inspiration was it? for truly it was an inspiration."

"An inspiration of the one who at Orleans inspired us all."

"I thought as much. And Orleans?"

"All's well in Orleans."

"Who commands?"

"M. le Prince de Choiseul d'Aillecourt."

"Ho! ho!" said M. le Duc. "Good!"

"Yes," said the vicomte, "he's just the one to make the stones cry *pish!* to Mazarin. And Paris?"

"Paris," said I, "dawdles at the Luxembourg, brays ass-like at the Hôtel-de-Ville, and elsewhere knows not its right hand from its left, but can learn it at a word."

"And who will speak the word?"

"Can you ask?"

"Faith! I am dull."

"Don't say that, my dear Noailles. If you are dull, God help the wits of others that I know of!"

"How did you find Monsieur?"

"Oh! very busy."

"Busy! at what, pray?"

"Listening to a comic song."

"A comic song! Who was singing it?"

"The Prince de Pajou."

"The—what the devil! ——"

"It was funny, M. le Duc, wasn't it?" said I.

"Funny? Oh! most laughable."

"But Lannoy," cried the vicomte, "if you love me, make this clear. First I hear of you at Renard's clinking glasses with M. le Prince de Pajou. That you've not explained. And now—incredible!—M. le Prince sings a comic song to Monsieur, and ——"

"He wasn't anxious to sing it, was he, M. le Duc?" said I. "Quite shy and diffident. It took much coaxing, eh?"

M. le Duc roared, and the vicomte was more bewildered than ever.

"But that's not all," said I. "I've brought connubial bliss to M. le Duc. Is it not so?"

"Ho! ho!" cried M. le Duc, "connubial bliss!

Pardieu! you have and with it fifteen hundred crowns."

"Zounds!" said the vicomte, "you were sober when you came, but you are both drunk now."

"With the fresh country air," said I. "It sometimes acts in that way. You have not yet heard all. M. le Duc is a knight of chivalry."

"A knight of chivalry!" roared the vicomte. "Glorious! Does he know it?"

"I didn't until last night," said M. le Duc, laughing.

"However," said I, "the fact is incontestable. His duchesse has given him the accolade."

"But," said the vicomte, "explain about the Prince de Pajou."

"Alas!" said I, "we've keyed up your curiosity and for the present it must stay keyed. In good time you shall learn all, but not now, not now. Believe me I have the best of reasons."

And thus we entered Paris, Monsieur's red-coats in advance, the six black horses and the coach following, then M. le Duc, the vicomte and I, afterward the green porte-arquebuses and the train. As we advanced, the people recognized Mademoiselle. The news spread, and long

before we reached the Luxembourg, her carriage was surrounded and followed by a crowd drawn from all the walks and ways of life, some armed, some unarmed, differing in visage, cut and color, but all united and swept along by the same shout. She bowed royally to them all, red heels and wooden shoes alike, for those who are above all bow to all, and thus we reached the courtyard of the Luxembourg. The guards kept the crowd outside the gates, and her carriage stopped at the palace entrance. She made her way to Monsieur, the vicomte and I attending, leaving M. le Duc to follow with the comtesses. The huissier opened both doors of the cabinet, and we entered.

Monsieur was walking about in a tantrum while grouped before him stood M. de Longueville, M. de Bouillon, the Marquis de Noirmoutier and the Duc d'Elboeuf, their habits brilliant, their backs bent and consternation clamoring on their faces.

"I tell you," said he, fretfully, "it's impossible. I am ill, seriously ill."

"You are ill, mon père?" said Mademoiselle.

If the Luxembourg had been blown up, they could not have been more surprised. M. de

Longueville uttered a cry of joy, the Duc d'Elboeuf and M. de Bouillon stood in such stupefaction that they forgot to bow, the marquis, whose wits were better, bent his back before her instead of Monsieur, while Monsieur himself grew red and stammered.

"My—my orders," said he, "if I understood them, were to stay in Orleans."

"Mon père," said Mademoiselle, "I had left Orleans before your orders were written, therefore they could not apply."

"But you should not have left."

"And why, pray?"

"Because I didn't tell you to leave. You should not have left without my order."

"Monsieur, mon père," said Mademoiselle, smiling, "you are, as you say, ill. I can quite believe you."

"I am ill," said Monsieur, hotly, "and I won't do what these gentlemen desire."

She swept them all with her proud glance, and they all recovered sufficiently to bow.

"And what do they desire?" said she.

"Mademoiselle," cried M. de Longueville, raising his broad shoulders, "we are in despair. M. le Prince de Condé has been attacked between

Montmartre and La Chapelle. The king's army outnumbers him. He has appealed to us to open the Porte St. Antoine so that in case of need he may retreat into Paris. Where he is, if he is hemmed in, he and his will be destroyed. Mon Dieu! Mademoiselle, it will then be up with us all."

"And you come to Monsieur?"

"To beg, to entreat, to implore Monsieur to mount his horse, see with his own eyes how matters stand and save M. de Condé."

"Mon père," said Mademoiselle, "what is your answer?"

Monsieur sat down.

"I am ill," said he with a sigh, "I am utterly unable to take part in any public business whatever, much less mount my horse."

"The place for those who are ill, Monsieur," said I, "is in bed."

"Oh! I am not ill enough for that," said he, shrugging his shoulders, "but I am ill."

"Then, Monsieur," said Mademoiselle, proudly, "you will do well at once to go to bed out of sight for where your honor is involved the world had best believe you cannot leave your bed than that you will not."

Monsieur answered with another shrug.

"I am at a loss to account for this ill-timed indifference of Your Royal Highness," said Mademoiselle, her patience sorely tried. "One would fancy you had signed a treaty with His Eminence."

It was a sharp fling. Monsieur reddened and looked at me, but I met his glance squarely.

"Monsieur," said I, "Mademoiselle has saved Orleans for you. Let her save Paris likewise."

He twisted his mustache irresolutely.

"Oh! Monsieur," cried M. de Longueville, "grant this at least. Mademoiselle has come at the crisis, a providence rescuing and redeeming."

He drummed with his fingers on the table.

"Monsieur," said M. de Noailles, who was furious, "reflect that M. de Condé is in danger in the faubourgs."

"Well," said Monsieur, fretfully, "am I responsible for that? What do you want? No one gives me a moment's peace. Peste! I say I am ill."

"That fact," said I, "we all admit. Therefore I request Your Royal Highness to write to the governor of Paris authorizing Mademoiselle to

represent you at the Hôtel-de-Ville, or wherever else it may be necessary, otherwise—I think Your Royal Highness has forgotten our last interview."

He flushed again, whirled around to the table and picked up a pen. But all this reluctance of his was, like his coat, on him and not in him. At bottom he was glad to be out of his muddle and rid of us all.

"There," said he, handing the letter to Mademoiselle. "You better take Madame de Frontenac with you. She is a woman of excellent sense."

"That goes without saying, *mon père*," said Mademoiselle, "for you have made her *maréchale de camp*."

Monsieur laughed.

"Adieu, *messieurs*," said he. "Ma fille, good luck to you!" and chuckling he left the cabinet to find his fancied ills.

"Gentlemen," said Mademoiselle, her voice quivering with her shame for Monsieur, "I beg that what you have seen remains with you alone." Then recovering her animation: "Join me, gentlemen, in an hour at the Hôtel-de-Ville and in your breasts bear this—To-day in Paris, as in Orleans, Mademoiselle commands!"

CHAPTER XXX

AT THE PORTE ST. ANTOINE

THE vicomte and I rode in haste to the Hôtel de Noailles to obtain fresh horses and equipment for the contest which we no longer doubted was upon us.

"Come," said he, as we dismounted, "we shall give His Eminence a *coup de grâce*, shall we not?"

"We shall, but to do it well we need one thing."

"And that is?"

"A thing to clamor courage, shake the army of M. le Prince de Condé to its centre and fling the proud white plume of Mademoiselle the oriflamme of all that's brave and bold in France—we need a martial song!"

"Magnificent! And you?"

"I'll see what wits are in me."

I left him, therefore, to give his orders and going into his little cabinet, seized a pen, the battle-harness of his silent sires fronting me

on every side. At the appointed time, he came again.

"Lannoy," he cried, "we must be off. Are you ready?"

"Ready? Yes. No! No! Mon Dieu! Give me a rhyme for— Ah! I have it! I have it! There! I'm done. I'm ready, I'm ready!"

"And the song?"

"The song," said I, "is here," and I extended it to him. He read it with flashing eyes.

"Lannoy," he cried, "it makes my heart bound!"

"Listen!" said I. "The air." And seizing the paper, I drew my sword and sang it for him, there in his little cabinet beneath the battle-ax of the giant Urbain-René.

"I'm on fire!" he cried, "on fire!"

"If it does thus," said I, "when sung by one, what when by five thousand?"

"Oh! then," he cried, "the very stones would muster martial."

"See!" said I, "'tis but a bit of paper, yet by it we'll knit every heart to steel and batter the bulwarks of His Eminence."

"Come then, to horse!" he cried.

"One moment still," said I, "till I adjust this

fair white scarf. I've worn it always next my heart, but in the day of danger it must cross my breast. I love it better than the *cordon bleu*. I would not give it for the king's."

We mounted and galloping through the Rue du Louvre, followed the quais to the Hôtel-de-Ville. There were groups everywhere, armed, alert, vociferous, and on the Place de Grève a clamoring crowd—good bourgeoisie mainly—armed, too, as chance chose, jostling one another about the steps of the Hôtel-de-Ville and growing each moment, swelled by those who came by the bridge from the Ile de la Cité. We rode through them to the entrance; the bells of Notre Dame clanged a warning peal, and the cannon's voice spoke La Chapelleward, deep and ominous.

She had not come, but we heard a cheer that heralded her coming, and then we saw her in a white robe caught with dark velvet bows, the red-coats of Monsieur about her, riding through the press upon her stallion with his crimson trappings. They recognized her—they whose brains bore the fresh memory of Orleans—and the Place de Grève shook with the shout—"Vive Mademoiselle!" She bowed her plumed head proudly to them all, waking her way with

praise, and when she saw us, said smiling, "Messieurs, you are punctual." The crowd about us pressed eagerly, crying to her to make her mind easy for they were ready to do whatever she wished, and before dismounting she spoke to them clearly, earnestly, affably, informing them that she came to seek the coöperation of the authorities of Paris, that she trusted all would yet be well with M. le Prince de Condé and that in any event she would not fail to prove worthy of the confidence they now placed in her zeal and in her faith. And all this with a smile that warmed their hearts, brought tears to the eyes of the dames de la ville and cries of joy from all.

We saw arrive M. le Duc, MM. de Longueville and de Bouillon, the Marquis de Noirmoutier and the Duc d'Elboeuf, while down the steps of the Hôtel-de-Ville came the Maréchal de l'Hôpital, red and rat-like, with Lefevre, provost of the merchants, stiff and stout, two yards each way. The maréchal bobbed an apology for not having come sooner. She thanked him for his courtesy, told him briefly that as Monsieur was indisposed, she came to be his representative and bade us all follow her to the council-hall.

We went, therefore, and found Messieurs de la Ville in the chamber whose high deep windows front the Place de Grève. They rose when she entered and listened silently while the registrar read her letter, and when the fact had worked its way into their bewigged heads that she had full powers and was for the nonce lieutenant-general of the kingdom, the Maréchal de l'Hôpital asked her orders, not without qualms and quavers.

"It is well, Monsieur le Maréchal," said Mademoiselle, "and if you obey my orders as promptly as I shall give them, M. le Prince de Condé will have reason to rejoice. First, then, the citizens shall be called to arms."

"That, Mademoiselle, is done already."

"Second. Two thousand citizens under arms shall be sent to M. de Condé."

"That is more difficult, but—but it can be done."

"Third. The army of M. de Condé shall have free passage through the city from the Porte St. Honoré to the Porte St. Antoine."

The maréchal blinked, Messieurs de la Ville looked mournfully down their noses, and silence reigned supreme. She drew herself up.

"Messieurs," said she, "your deliberation fits

you ill, you who stand debtors to Monsieur and to M. le Prince de Condé for favors shown Paris. Where is your gratitude? Ma foi! You trim your sails. That will not save you. If M. de Condé is defeated, His Eminence will crush you all."

"But, Mademoiselle," said the Maréchal de l'Hôpital, still blinking, "remember that if the army of M. de Condé had not approached Paris, the army of His Majesty would not have done so."

"Remember, sir!" she cried, "remember! I remember this, that while you waste the golden moments chattering your idle arguments, M. le Prince de Condé dares death within your faubourgs. Messieurs de la Ville, you've heard my orders. Learn your first lesson—obedience. Go and obey!"

They filed out of the council-hall to reach their decision in private, leaving us alone with Mademoiselle. She did not speak to us or regard us, but paced to and fro, like a lioness caged, striking her train from time to time impatiently with her whip. Then entering the bay of one of the deep high windows, she knelt, her robe sweeping behind her, and bending her proud white

plume, prayed to the God that guards us all to bless her high emprise. And we silent and with bowed heads sent likewise a supplication.

They came again—the maréchal and the Messieurs de la Ville—and she faced them calmly.

“Well, gentlemen?” said she.

“Mademoiselle,” said the maréchal, “I and Messieurs de la Ville will obey any orders Your Royal Highness may see fit to issue.”

Fair words said with a poor grace.

“Ah!” said she, smiling. Then turning to us, “M. le Duc d’Elboeuf, M. le Marquis de Noirmoutier, ride at full speed to the Porte St. Honoré and bid them open it in my name. And you, messieurs, attend me to the Porte St. Antoine.”

She left the council-hall, saluting Messieurs de la Ville, and we followed her to the steps—M. de Noailles, M. le Duc, MM. de Longueville and de Bouillon and I. The Maréchal de l’Hôpital, too, was of the party, but not for long.

The Place de Grève greeted her reappearance with a cheer, an honest cheer that sought its sources well, while the people pressed forward in their eagerness to see her better. I perceived by the steps, my friend, the forgeron, he of the

big hammer, the black bear of the Pont Neuf, and before she could mount, he came to her.

"Mademoiselle," said he, pulling off the leather cap he wore, "why does *he* follow you?" And he pointed his finger at the Maréchal de l'Hôpital, who changed from a red rat to a white one. "He's a Mazarin, Mademoiselle," continued the fellow. "He's a Mazarin. And if you've any fault to find with him, Mademoiselle, if he don't bend his head low enough, if he don't give you what you want, tell me, Mademoiselle! tell me! I'll drown him. By G—d! I'll drown him."

"Yes," they shouted, "we'll drown him!" And they'd have done it too, ay! torn him limb from limb had she but given the word.

She smiled sweetly on them all and bowing to the brave black bear, said graciously, "My friend, I have no fault to find with M. le Gouverneur de Paris, for he has granted all I ask for."

"In that case," said he, "all's right, but let him go back to the Hôtel-de-Ville and see he walks uprightly."

The maréchal, waiting for no second bidding, vanished. Mademoiselle mounted, and as I passed to my horse, the smith recognized me and stood gaping. "Come," said I, tapping him on

the shoulder, "you got your Broussel, eh?" And as I swung into the saddle, I heard, like an echo of the wide Pont Neuf,—“By G—d! a miracle! He talked the same as me.”

We galloped then to St. Antoine, the din of battle in our ears. We passed the wounded, we passed the panic-stricken stragglers, and reached at last the gate beyond which the Bastille rears its mighty, menacing towers. Here she drew rein, the musketeers, who guarded, brave in blue and black, rushing before the barrier, shouting like men who would believe yet doubt, “It is Mademoiselle?”

“Yes,” she cried, tightening her crimson bridle-reins, “it is Mademoiselle, and she bids you open your gate to Monsieur le Prince le grand Condé!”

They obeyed her, and we rode on to the Bastille. On all sides were men-at-arms ranked and bewildered, porte-arquebuses running hither and thither not knowing where or why, and the distant roll of drums and clash of steel. M. de Longueville left us to carry news of her coming to the Prince de Condé, and she halted before a house, I cannot now recall whose or what, hard by the Bastille. We entered, and the Prince de

Condé came—tall, well-knit, his cuirass battered by a score of blows, his scabbard gone, his sword in his hand, his great boots blood-stained, his head bare, his black hair matted with dust and dirt, his face with its black mustache and high Bourbon nose, pale, despairing. And so he stood before her and before us all, a Prince of the Blood who at Rocroi and Nördlingen had gained his name, well-worn, well-won—le grand Condé!

“Ah! Mademoiselle,” he cried, “Mademoiselle, I am wretched. I have lost all my friends. Nemours is killed, La Rochefoucauld and Clinchamp wounded, wounded fatally, Guitaut dying, my men outnumbered and disheartened,” and overcome by it all he sat down and dropping his sword, wept—his tears those of a strong man from whom hope has fled.

She rose.

“Monsieur le Prince,” said she, “you have one friend who’s not yet dead. Here is Mademoiselle.”

He raised his head.

“Monsieur le Prince,” said I, “you say your men are doubting and disheartened. Tell them Mademoiselle has come. Aye! more—give them this and bid them copy it and scatter it like chaff.

See! 'tis but a bit of paper, yet by it we'll knit them all to steel and batter the bulwarks of His Eminence."

He read it and he rose.

"Monsieur le Comte," said he, "the men who sing a song like that will war and win."

"Go then, Monsieur le Prince," said Mademoiselle, "prepare them while I visit the Bastille, and when I come again they shall pass me in review."

He left us, while Mademoiselle, the vicomte, M. le Duc and I went on foot to the Bastille where the governor, M. de Louviers, met us at the drawbridge. When she had told him that she stood in Monsieur's stead, he placed no difficulty in her way, but conducted us up the narrow, winding staircase to the towers. We stood in the clear, bright air above Paris, above the terror and the turmoil, and the transition was inspiring. Below us in the distance from La Chapelle to Menilmontant stretched the royal army. Turenne's fierce plumes and pennons fluttered on the left, and on the right, far-flashing, blazed the helmets of Laferté Senectère.

I can see them yet, those soldiers on the battlements of the Bastille—four men to a gun. How they gazed at her!

"M. de Louviers," said she, "point your cannon."

The governor grew pale.

"Mademoiselle," said he, trembling, "it is the king's army."

She faced him sternly.

"It is I who command," said she. "You shall point the Bastille cannon at the army of the king."

Then paying no attention to the consternation caused by her words, she left the towers, and we went again to the Porte St. Antoine. She mounted her horse, and the army of the Prince de Condé came. The vicomte, M. le Duc and I drew swords and riding side by side with M. de Condé led the lighthorse, and thus we passed her—aye! passed her as she sat her battle-stallion, her great black chapeau holding high her white war-welcoming plume, and the riding-whip of Orleans in her hand. The men who held the halberds cried her name, the lowly bourgeois kissed her with his eyes, while the princes and the peers, saddle-set to front the fray, caught her glance and rode on happy then to die. And as we rode we sang my battle-song:

See the swords that leap in lines of fire!

Hark! hark! how cheers resounding roar!

Every soldier burns with sacred ire,

Crested captains clamoring war,

Crested captains clamoring war.

With their heads reared high 'mid red alarms,

With hearts that leap, as leopards can,

To catch the music of the van,

March on the militant men-at-arms.

Hark! hark! defying hell

The clear-toned clarions swell:

To horse! to horse! For her we love!

Our Maid! Our Mademoiselle!

Hear the drums that beat the battle's breath!

Hark! hark! the cannon's iron roar!

Every gallant gallops well to death

On a far-flung furious floor,

On a far-flung furious floor.

With their souls in song the musketeers

Advance where glory guides the way,

While foaming flood-like to the fray

Ride on the thundering cavaliers.

Hark! hark! defying hell

The clear-toned clarions swell:

To horse! to horse! For her we love!

Our Maid! Our Mademoiselle!

Lo! the men of might in toils that tire!

Hark! hark! how clear the peasants' cheers!

In the ranks that sweat march son and sire

Led by their princes and their peers,

Led by their princes and their peers.

From the hallowed hills of Dauphiné

Their song swells high o'er ledge and lee,

From fair Navarre, from Normandie.

To what great guardian do they pray?
Hark! hark! defying hell
The clear-toned clarions swell:
To horse! to horse! For her we love!
Our Maid! Our Mademoiselle!

The heights of Charonne were bright with brilliant colors, for there the king and the cardinal had taken their position, the royal carriages and the royal horses standing out against the sky. The drums were beating the charge, and the arquebuse-fire rattled fiercely at the Picpus barricade where Turenne's flame-colored infantry pressed to the assault. Across the plain like dark, devouring birds of prey swept the swift horsemen of Laferté Senectère. We galloped to meet them, leading the light-horse of Beauchène, and I raised my right arm, shouting exultingly the war-cry of my house, "Roi ne puis, Prince ne daigne, Lannoy je suis!"

And then we met with a deafening shock and fought struggling, rearing, falling through furious manes to hoofs more furious, fought amid a frightful din of steel, under a canopy of quivering plumes and over bloody curbs tossed high in pain, fought oblivious to all save fury, blind with blood-madness and the glut of killing.

I saw the vicomte fall and cut my way to him, though all the while my shoulder sent a red stream over the fair white scarf that crossed my breast. Ah! they outnumbered us, those horsemen of Laferté Senectère, broke us, and wheeling again prepared for a second charge. My horse was struck and fell, but I rose to my feet and pushing on found the vicomte gasping but not gone. I pressed his hand, and smiling faintly, he looked up at me. I stood over him, unbonneted, sword in hand, waiting the charge, and then I perceived M. le Duc beside me. He, too, had been dismounted and was wounded, but his four black plumes waved still defiantly. "Mon-sieur," I said, "here is the place to die." For answer he pressed my hand, his face drawn and strangely pale. The royal trumpets sounded, the infantry of Turenne advanced, and the horsemen of Laferté Senectère came charging on, but as they came, with a roar that shook the plain the battlements of the Bastille blazed like a volcano, hurling into the advancing infantry, into the charging horsemen, a hail of iron. The ranks reeled and reared, shook and staggered, wheeled and fled, but the great guns of the Bastille did not cease their roar, while on the high battle-

ments, with a line of fire all about her, stood Mademoiselle, la Grande Mademoiselle, whose hand was hurling us the victory.

The little army of the Prince de Condé rallied, and as the light-horse went to take Charonne, the prince came riding to me as I bent over the vicomte.

"Who is it, M. le Comte?" said he.

I stepped aside, and he saw.

"Is he gone?" said the prince, dismounting.

"Yes," said I, "he is gone, but when I took his hand, he knew me. I am glad of that."

"He is happy," said the prince, "see, there is a smile on his face even now."

"Yes," said I, "he died for Mademoiselle."

"Who is this?" said the prince.

I turned. M. le Duc had fallen on his face. We raised him. There was a frightful wound in his side.

"It is the Duc de Druillon d'Ormesson," said the prince. "That is a bad wound."

"He was dying," said I, "when he stood beside me."

"Strange!" said the prince. "For some reason I have always thought of him as a comedian."

"A comedian's life, M. le Prince," said I, "is not all comedy."

We laid him down, and the prince turned to me. "I'll send you men and stretchers," said he. Then he rode away, leaving me among the dead. I bent over them both and looked at them long. Twilight had come, and from the heights of Charonne, where once the king and the cardinal had stood, sounded the clarions of our van. "Ah!" said I, "the clarions! To these, my friends, the call will come no more. Why is one chosen and another left?" The soldiers of the prince came with their stretchers, and I followed the dead from the field. Thus the day closed at St. Antoine; we had lost many who bore proud names and were the best blood in France; it was victory dearly bought.

But all we had gained was to be undone by the negotiations which followed, and, through the treachery and cowardice of those who conducted them, the king and the cardinal came to their power again. I, like many others, was exiled from Paris and the court and went to my Château of Lannoy. And the young king picked up his sceptre at the age of seventeen, and as the comte, my father, had said, the nobles "crowded

his chamber like a pack of cringing curs," ay! "licked the varnish from his palace-floors," and I myself have seen it. And if in after years when the Fronde was but a memory, I came to court and was *écuyer* to His Majesty, it was because my blood sent me to serve France, and there was then no other way. But I did not forget the great comte's words; "There will not be a lord in France to stand erect before him." I have stood erect and have told him truth when he asked it. That is not much, I dare say, but I have done what I could.

And Mademoiselle? They banished her from Paris, and I have never seen her since the day she stood upon the fire-flaming battlements of the Bastille. The king could never forgive her for turning his cannon upon his army. Her white scarf is beside me now. The golden fringe is faded, and it bears the blood I shed at St. Antoine. Twelve years ago to-day, they brought me word that she was dead—my great princesse! But, though Mademoiselle de Montpensier has gone, the Grand Mademoiselle can never die, for she is a divinity; a divinity that came to me a dazzling vision in my youth, a divinity I have loved through life, a divinity those who are to follow

us may find, a divinity we seek vainly among all the marble deities that deck Versailles and Marly—Liberty.

Who comes here? 'Tis Death, my foe. Ah! how he strides, draped in a shroud! Monsieur, I welcome you. You were my enemy till I had finished, but I have won my duel. Let us go together. Your hand!

THE END.

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